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THACKERAY'S
VANITY FAIR

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AGRA
RAM PRASAD & BROS.,
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS

1928

INTRODUCTION

William Makepeace Thackeray, the celebrated Victorian novelist, (born 1811, died 1863), is best known to most of us as the author of *Vanity Fair* (1846) and *Esmond* (1852). His other important novels include *Pendennis* (1850), *The Newcomes* (1854), and *The Virginians* (1857); while the *Great Hogarty Diamond*, *Lovel the Widower*, and the unfinished *Denis Duval* are less familiar to the ordinary reader. The burlesque entitled *Rebecca and Rowena* is ever-popular: and the *Four Georges* and *English Humorists of the 18th Century* are important contributions to the study of the literature and social history of that period.

Esmond surpasses *Vanity Fair* in some respects. It is an exceptionally brilliant picture of a most interesting—indeed, fascinating—period of English history. It is historical, or, at least, semi-historical; for we meet in its pages the great personages of the time, Steel and Addison, Swift, Harley, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, and so on: and they influence the life of Henry Esmond. One can with difficulty recollect any novel which re-creates more adequately an earlier epoch, and maintains more consistently “the illusion of a past age,” than Thackeray has done in *Esmond*.

Unlike the brilliant age of Queen Anne, the period in which *Vanity Fair* is set is not one which stands out particularly in history. In itself infinitely less picturesque, it

was also, perhaps, too close to Thackeray's own lifetime for him to do it justice. Apart, therefore, from the stirring incident of Waterloo, upon which the story may be said to hinge, the novel lacks historical interest. There are to be met with in its pages no personages of history. In short, it does not reconstruct a period as *Esmond* does, or as Sir Walter Scott has done in his great novels.

On the other hand, *Vanity Fair* makes a greater popular appeal than *Esmond*. It has more sentiment ; it touches the feelings more deeply ; it provides more pathos, more humour, more philosophic reflection, perhaps, on men and motives. It deals with the everyday life of ordinary folks ; and while we cannot but admit that *Esmond* has in Beatrix Esmond a superlative creation of the novelist's art, and many scenes of high dramatic interest ; yet *Vanity Fair* has fully as many scenes of human interest and pathos, and undoubtedly surpasses the other in the variety of its brilliant character sketches. There are few novels so full of real people--people whom we know to be real, whom we welcome as old acquaintances, whose company we seek again and again, and whom we claim as intimate friends--as *Vanity Fair*.

It is no doubt true that the tendency to overdraw, to indulge in caricature, is evident here and there in its pages. We recognize it in some of Thackeray's sketches of the life of the time ; e.g., at Queen's Crawley : and in the portraits of some of the minor characters, such as the butlers, footmen, and so on, in the story : in the sketches of

the boorish country baronet and his hard-riding, hard drinking brother, the Rector : or in that of the sentimental lady-companion, Miss Briggs, or the equally sentimental stout East Indian civilian, Joseph Sedley. But the chief characters, the people who matter in the story, are depicted with a marvellous consistency,—Dobbin, Amelia, Rawdon Crawley, and Becky Sharp.

The interwoven love-stories of the two girls, Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp, make up the tale told in *Vanity Fair* : and the tale provides a study in contrasts. Amelia is a healthy young English girl, with dark hair, soft brown eyes, and rosy cheeks. Of a gentle and generous nature, she is beloved by all. She has little sense of humour : but she will laugh with you, rather than hurt your feelings ; while she is extremely tender-hearted, and absurdly prone to weep on the slightest provocation. Without too much intellect, she has undoubted feminine charm ; and she is sincere, open, unworldly, devout. Becky Sharp, on the other hand, is small and slight, fair-haired, and with green eyes. She is half French. Nobody can really love her, for she is self-centred and hard. Her sense of humour is very strongly developed, but without the charity which should accompany it ; for she laughs, not with you, but at you. Unemotional, she seldom weeps, and almost never in sincerity of grief. She is possessed of a good intellect, and is a brilliant conversationalist ; but she fascinates rather than charms. Her quick brain enables her to seize at once the chances which the world offers her ; and throughout she

is a consummate actress, concealing her real feelings, always a deceiver.

The interwoven stories sustain this contrast. Amelia is the carefully-nurtured daughter of respectable, God-fearing, middle-class people ; while Becky is the penniless orphan child of an impecunious English painter and a French dancing-girl, from whom she has inherited in full the Bohemian temperament. When the girls get married, Amelia cherishes a feeling of almost holy worship for her husband : Becky never loses her feeling of superiority over, mingled with a kind of contempt for, hers. The faithful little innocent, Amelia, has a husband who is fickle ; the faithless little schemer, Becky, has one who is loyal. She loves nobody but herself, whereas Amelia spends her whole life in the service of others. Each has a child, and while Amelia adores hers, Becky's chief feeling is indifference amounting to actual dislike. Men fall easy victims to the little green-eyed woman : for her knowledge of the sex is vast ; and when she cares she can have them at her feet,—Jos, the two Pitts, Rawdon, George Osborne, Lord Steyne, and others unknown,—all the men she meets, in fact, except the honest, simple Dobbin. It is true to her skill that she labels him at once as incorruptible, and wastes no time upon him. Amelia knows nothing of men.

The progress of their story brings out only more fully this contrast. Amelia is at the outset in comfortable circumstances ; she experiences poverty and hardship ; but in the end she regains worldly prosperity. Becky faces the

world penniless, attains to great social heights and triumphs, and finishes in a social position which exposes her to suspicion, and is, at the best, anomalous. In these changes each girl is true to her principles and outlook on life : for, rich or poor, happy or sorrowful, Amelia reveals to us the same devout nature and gentle heart ; while the other consistently carries out her plan to let nothing stand in the way of her advancement in the world, and is plotting and scheming all the time, an utterly unscrupulous woman.

But the marvellous thing yet is that it is Becky who, by the amazing skill of the author's portraiture, retains our interest and commands our admiration. Amelia, like her lover the incorruptible Dobbin, does not hold us as Becky does. There is in the latter's character that variety, and that saving grace of humour, which fascinate the reader. He finds Becky extraordinarily good company, as did Rawdon, Pitt, Steyne, and the others. One's sympathies go out to her as they go out to Richard of Gloucester in the play ; for the victims of both are as a rule dull dogs, and deserve nothing better.

The sketch of Rawdon the husband is as true to life as that of his wife, Becky, and so he never forfeits our sympathies. His portraiture is, according to Professor Saintsbury, "a perfectly marvellous piece of verisimilitude, neither rouged nor blackened."

Vanity Fair has other qualities. Its author comes many times before the curtain, so to speak, to give us his obser-

vations on the people and the occurrences of the story. There is much in these little lectures that is thoughtful and kindly and true ; their charm is the greater because their delivery is usually in the middle of the narrative. Further, the plot of the novel is skilfully handled, and the dialogues are everywhere consistent and clever. But the sketches of character are its most remarkable feature, and of these the pictures of Rawdon Crawley and his sandy-haired little devil of a wife are perfect.

A word about abridgement. Many people think it akin to desecration to abridge a classic ; but they forget that when we " skip " in reading a story we are doing nothing else. There is no standard writer whose books lend themselves so obviously to systematic " skipping " by the youthful reader as Thackeray. This abridgement, therefore, merely omits what an ordinary young student would pass quickly over. Surely it is necessary for every student of English literature to become acquainted with Thackeray's genius ; yet there is much in his pages that can only repel. To tempt the youthful reader to an early study of this great writer is sufficient justification for an abridgement of *Vanity Fair*. Doubtless, he will lose the easy flow of Thackeray's narrative, which excision must needs interrupt. With less regret he will lose the philosophic reflections of the author, which can have no place in an abridgment ; but he will, at any rate, get the story of *Vanity Fair*, and the other things may await his more mature study.

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VANITY FAIR

(A NOVEL WITHOUT A HERO)

CHAPTER I

AMELIA AND REBECCA

While the nineteenth century was in its teens, there drove up to Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, on Chiswick Mall, a large family coach, with two fat horses, driven by a fat coachman in a three-cornered hat and wig. As it drew up opposite Miss Pinkerton's brass plate, and the servant pulled the bell, at least a score of young heads were seen peering out of the narrow windows of the stately old brick house, and the acute observer might have recognized the little red nose of Miss Jemima Pinkerton rising over some geraniums in the drawing-room window.

"It is Mrs. Sedley's coach, sister," said Miss Jemima. "The coachman has a new red waistcoat."

"Have you completed all the necessary preparations incident to Miss Sedley's departure, Miss Jemima?" asked Miss Pinkerton, that majestic lady, the Semiramis of Hammersmith, the friend of Doctor Johnson.

"The girls were up at four this morning, packing her trunks, sister," replied Miss Jemima.

"And I trust you have made a copy of Miss Sedley's account. This is it, is it? Be kind enough to address it

to John Sedley, Esquire, and to seal this billet which I have written to his lady."

This done, Miss Pinkerton proceeded to write her own name, and Miss Sedley's, in the fly-leaf of a Johnson's Dictionary - the interesting work which she invariably presented to her scholars, on their departure from the Mall. On the cover was inserted a copy of 'Lines addressed to a young lady on quitting Miss Pinkerton's school ; by the late revered Doctor Samuel Johnson.' In fact the Doctor's name was always on the lips of this majestic woman, and a visit he had paid to her was the cause of her reputation and fortune.

Being commanded to get the Dictionary from the cupboard, Miss Jemima had extracted two copies, and when Miss Pinkerton had finished the inscription in the first, handed her the second with a dubious and timid air.

"For whom is this, Miss Jemima?" asked Miss Pinkerton, with awful coldness.

"For Becky Sharp," answered Jemima, trembling and blushing ; "she's going too."

"Miss Jemima!" exclaimed Miss Pinkerton. "Are you in your senses? Replace the Dictionary in the cupboard, and never venture to take such a liberty in future. Send Miss Sedley instantly to me."

Miss Sedley's papa was a merchant in London, and a man of some wealth ; whereas Miss Sharp was an artiled pupil, for whom Miss Pinkerton had done, as she thought, quite enough, without conferring upon her at parting the high honour of the Dictionary.

Indeed, Miss Amelia Sedley deserved all that could be said in her praise, for she could not only sing like a lark, and dance like a fairy ; but she had such a kindly, tender, generous heart of her own, as won the love of everybody who came near her. Her face blushed with rosy health and her lips with the freshest of smiles, and her eyes sparkled with the brightest good-humour, except indeed when they filled with tears, and that was a great deal too often ; for the silly thing would cry over a dead canary ; or over the end of a novel, were it ever so stupid ; and there was no one hard-hearted enough to say an unkind word to her.

So that when the day of departure came, between her two customs of laughing and crying, Miss Sedley was greatly puzzled how to act. She was glad to go home, and yet most wofully sad at leaving school. She had to make and receive at least a score of presents, and to make a score of promises to write every week. She received an admirable discourse from Miss Pinkerton on parting, intolerably long, pompous, and tedious. A seed-cake and a bottle of wine were produced in the drawing-room ; and these refreshments partaken of, Miss Sedley was at liberty to depart.

"You'll go in and say good-bye to Miss Pinkerton, Becky !" said Miss Jemima to a young lady of whom nobody took any notice, and who was coming downstairs carrying her own bandbox.

"I suppose I must," said Miss Sharp calmly, and much to the wonder of Miss Jemima ; and the latter having

knocked at the door and receiving permission to come in, Miss Sharp advanced in a very unconcerned manner, and said in French, and with a perfect accent, "*Mademoiselle, je viens vous faire mes adieux.*"

Miss Pinkerton did not understand French ; she only directed those who did : but biting her lips and throwing up her venerable and Roman-nosed head, she said, " Miss Sharp, I wish you a good morning." As she spoke she waved one hand, both by way of adieu, and to give Miss Sharp an opportunity of shaking one of the fingers of the hand which was held out for that purpose.

Miss Sharp only folded her own hands with a very frigid smile and bow, and quite declined to accept the proffered honour ; on which Semiramis tossed up her head more indignantly than ever. " Heaven bless you, my child," said she, embracing Amelia, and scowling the while over the girl's shoulder at Miss Sharp. " Come away, Becky," said Miss Jemima, pulling the young woman away in great alarm, and the drawing-room door closed upon them for ever.

Then came the struggle and parting below. Words refuse to tell it. All the servants were there in the hall—all the dear friends all the young ladies, and there was such a hugging, and kissing, and crying, as no pen can depict. The embracing was over ; they parted—that is, Miss Sedley parted from her friends. Miss Sharp had demurely entered the carriage some minutes before. Nobody cried for leaving *her*.

The carriage-door slammed. "Stop," cried Miss Jemima, rushing to the gate. "Becky, Becky Sharp, here's a book for you that my sister—that is, I,—Johnson's Dictionary, you know ; you mustn't leave us without that. Good-bye "

And the kind creature retreated into the garden, overcome with emotions.

But, lo ! just as the coach drove off, Miss Sharp put her pale face out of the window, and actually flung the book back into the garden.

When Miss Sharp had seen the Dictionary fall at the feet of the astonished Miss Jemima, her countenance, which had worn an almost livid look of hatred, assumed a smile that was scarcely more agreeable, and she sank back in the carriage, saying "So much for the Dictionary ; and, thank God, I'm out of Chiswick."

Miss Sedley was almost as flurried at the act of defiance as Miss Jemima had been. "How could you do so, Rebecca?" she said. "I hate the whole house," said Miss Sharp, with a bitter laugh. "And I hate Miss Pinkerton with all my soul. For two years I have only had insults from her. I have been treated worse than any servant in the kitchen. I have never had a friend or a kind word, except from you. I wish Miss Pinkerton were in the Thames. I wouldn't pick her out, that I wouldn't."

"O Rebecca, for shame !" cried Miss Sedley, "How can you have such wicked, revengeful thoughts ?"

"Revenge may be wicked, but it's natural," answered Miss Rebecca. "I'm no angel." And, to say the truth, she certainly was not.

The world is a looking-glass, and gives back to every man the reflection of his own face. Frown at it, and it will in return look sourly upon you; laugh with it, and it is a jolly kind companion. This is certain, that if the world neglected Miss Sharp, she never was known to have done a good action on behalf of anybody. Nor can it be expected that all should be as amiable as Miss Sedley, who took every opportunity to conquer Rebecca's hard-heartedness and ill-humour, and by a thousand kind words overcame her hostility to her fellow-creatures.

Miss Sharp's father had been an artist, employed at Miss Pinkerton's school. He was a clever artist; but a careless man, always in debt. As it was with the utmost difficulty that he could keep himself, he thought to better his circumstances by marrying a young French woman, by profession an opera-girl. The mother had had some education somewhere, and Rebecca spoke French with purity and a Parisian accent. It was in these days rather a rare accomplishment, and led to her engagement with the orthodox Miss Pinkerton. For, her mother being dead, her father, finding himself not likely to live much longer, wrote a manly and pathetic letter to Miss Pinkerton, recommending the orphan child to her protection, and so descended to the grave. Rebecca was seventeen when she came to Chiswick, her duties being to talk French, and

her privileges to live cost free, and, with a few guineas a year, to gather scraps of knowledge from the professors who attended the school.

She was small and slight in person, pale, sandy-haired, and with eyes habitually cast down : when they looked up, they were large, odd, and attractive. By the side of many tall and bouncing young ladies in the school, Rebecca Sharp looked like a child. But she had the dismal precocity of poverty ; many a tradesman had she coaxed and wheedled into good humour, and into the granting of one meal more. She sat commonly with her father, and heard the talk of his wild companions—often but ill-suited for a girl to hear. But she had never been a girl, she said ; she had been a woman since she was eight years old.

When the catastrophe came, and she was brought to the Mall, the rigid formality of the place, the prayers and the meals, the lessons and the walks, oppressed her beyond endurance . and she looked back to the freedom and beggary of her old life with so much regret, that everybody fancied she was consumed with grief for her father. In her little room in the garret they heard her walking and sobbing at night ; but it was with rage, and not with grief. She had not been much of a dissembler, until now her loneliness taught her to feign. She had no soft maternal heart, this unlucky girl, otherwise the talk of the younger children, with whose care she was chiefly entrusted, might have soothed her ; but she lived among them two years, and no one was sorry that she went away. The gentle tender-hearted Amelia

Sedley was the only person to whom she could attach herself in the least ; and who could help attaching herself to Amelia ?

The happiness—the superior advantages of the other girls—gave Rebecca inexpressible pangs of envy. “ What airs these girls give themselves on account of their birth and wealth,” she thought ; “ I am as clever, as charming, and as well-bred as any, yet everybody passes me by here !” She determined at any rate to get free from the prison in which she found herself, and now began to make connected plans for the future.

She took advantage, therefore, of the means of study the place offered ; and, as she was already a musician and a good linguist, she speedily went through the little course of study which was considered necessary for ladies in those days. Her music she practised incessantly, and one day she was heard to play a piece so well, that Miss Pinkerton thought wisely she could now spare the expense of a master for the juniors, and intimated to Miss Sharp that she was to instruct them in music for the future.

The girl refused ; to the astonishment of the majestic mistress of the school. “ I am here to speak French with the children,” Rebecca said abruptly, “ not to teach them music, and save money for you. Give me money and I will teach them.”

Semiramis was obliged to yield, and, of course, disliked her from that day. “ For five-and-thirty years,” she said,

"I have never seen the individual who has dared in my own house to question my authority. I have nourished a viper in my bosom."

"A viper a fiddlestick," said Miss Sharp to the old lady, almost fainting with astonishment. "You took me because I was useful. There is no question of gratitude between us. I hate this place, and want to leave it. I will do nothing here but what I am obliged to do. Give me a sum of money, and get rid of me," she continued, "or if you like better, get me a good place as governess in a nobleman's family—you can do so if you please."

Worthy Miss Pinkerton had no will or strength like that of her little apprentice, and tried in vain to overawe her. In order, therefore, to maintain authority in her school, it became necessary to remove this rebel, and hearing that Sir Pitt Crawley's family was in want of a governess, she actually recommended Miss Sharp for the situation. "I cannot, certainly," she said, "find fault with Miss Sharp's conduct, except to myself; and must allow that her talents and accomplishments are of a high order."

So the schoolmistress reconciled the recommendation to her conscience, the indentures were cancelled, and the apprentice was free. And as Miss Sedley was about to leave school, and had a friendship for Miss Sharp, Becky was invited by her friend to pass a week with her at home before she entered upon her duties as governess.

CHAPTER II.

VAUXHALL

Thus the world began for these two young ladies. By the time Kensington turnpike was reached, Amelia had not forgotten her school companions, but she had dried her tears ; and when the carriage reached Russell Square she skipped out, as happy and as handsome a girl as any in the whole big city of London. Both the footman and the coachman agreed on this point, and so did her father and mother, and so did every one of the servants in the house as they stood curtsying and smiling, in the hall, to welcome their young mistress.

You may be sure that she showed Rebecca over every room of the house, and everything in every one of her drawers ; and her books, and her piano, and her dresses, necklaces, and brooches. She insisted upon Rebecca's accepting the white cornelian and the turquoise rings, and the sweet sprigged muslin, which was too small for her now, though it would fit her friend to a nicety. Rebecca kissed the white cornelian necklace as she put it on ; and vowed she would never, never, part with it. When the dinner-bell rang she went downstairs with her arm around her friend's waist, as is the habit of young ladies.

A very stout man, with a red striped waistcoat and an apple-green coat with steel buttons almost as large as crown pieces, was reading the paper by the fire when the girls entered the drawing-room, and he bounced off his arm-chair and blushed excessively at this apparition.

"It's only your sister, Joseph," said Amelia, laughing, and shaking his hand. "I've come home for good, you know; and this is my friend, Miss Sharp, whom you have heard me mention."

"No, never, upon my word,—that is, yes—what abominably cold weather, Miss;" and herewith Joseph fell to poking the fire with all his might, although it was in the middle of June.

"He's rather handsome," whispered Rebecca to Amelia.

"Do you think so?" said the latter. "I'll tell him."

"Darling! not for worlds," said Miss Sharp, starting back as timid as a fawn. She had previously made a respectful virgin-like curtsy to the gentleman, and her modest eyes gazed so perseveringly on the carpet that it was a wonder how she could have found an opportunity to see him.

Joseph still continued a huge clattering at the poker and tongs, puffing and blowing the while. At this minute the father of the family walked in, rattling his seals like a true British merchant.

"This young lady is your friend, Emmy? Miss Sharp, I am very happy to see you. Come, Joseph, take Miss Sharp down to dinner."

"I promised Bonamy of our service, sir," said Joseph, "to dine with him."

"Oh, fie! didn't you tell your mother you would dine here?"

"There's a pillau, Joseph," said Mrs. Sedley, "just as you like it, and the best turbot in Billingsgate."

“Come, come, sir, walk downstairs with Miss Sharp, and I will follow with these two young women,” said the father, and he took an arm of wife and daughter, and walked merrily off.

Joseph Sedley was twelve years older than his sister. He was in the East India Company's Civil Service, and his name appeared, at the period of which we write, as Collector of Boggley Wollah, in Bengal, an honourable and lucrative post, as everybody knows; situated in a fine, lonely, marshy, jungly district. Ramgunge, where there is a magistrate, is only forty miles off, and there is a cavalry station about thirty miles farther. So Joseph wrote home to his parents, when he took possession of his collectorship. He had lived for about eight years, quite alone, at this charming place, meeting scarcely a soul. Luckily he caught a liver complaint, for the cure of which he returned to England. He did not live with his parents, but had lodgings of his own, like a gay young bachelor. He drove his horses in the park; he dined at the fashionable taverns; he frequented the theatres; he made his appearance at the opera.

But he was as lonely in London as in his jungle at Boggley Wollah, and but for his doctor, and the society of his liver complaint, he must have died of loneliness. The appearance of a lady frightened him beyond measure; hence it was but seldom that he joined the paternal circle in Russell Square, where there was plenty of gaiety.

Downstairs, then, they went, Joseph very red and blushing, Rebecca very modest, and holding her green eyes downwards. She was dressed in white, with bare shoulders as white as snow - the picture of youth, unprotected innocence, and humble virgin simplicity. "I must be very quiet," thought Rebecca, "and very much interested in India."

Now we have heard how Mrs. Sedley had prepared a fine curry for her son, and in the course of dinner a portion of this dish was offered to Rebecca. "What is it?" said she, turning an appealing look to Mr Joseph.

"Capital," said he. His mouth was full of it; his face was red with the delightful exercise of gobbling.

"Oh, I must try some," said Miss Rebecca, helping herself. "I am sure everything must be good that comes from India."

"Do you find it as good as everything else from India?" said Mr. Sedley, laughing.

"Oh, excellent!" replied Rebecca, who was suffering tortures with the cayenne pepper.

"Try a chili with it, Miss Sharp," said Joseph, really interested. "A chili," said Rebecca, gasping. "Oh, yes!" She thought a chili was something cool, as the name imported. "How fresh and green they look," she said, and put one into her mouth. It was hotter than the curry; flesh and blood could bear it no longer. "Water, for Heaven's sake, water!" she cried. Mr. Sedley burst out laughing (he was a coarse man, from the Stock

Exchange, where they love practical jokes.) " They are real Indian, I assure you ! " said he.

The paternal laugh was echoed by Joseph, who thought the joke capital. The ladies only smiled a little. They thought poor Rebecca suffered too much. She would have liked to choke old Sedley, but she swallowed her mortification as well as she had the curry before it.

" I shall take care how I let *you* choose for me another time," she said, with a swift glance at Joseph. " I didn't think men were fond of putting poor harmless girls to pain."

In a day or two Becky was friends with all the household. She was full of respectful gratitude to Mrs. Sedley ; laughed at Mr. Sedley's jokes with a cordiality which not a little pleased and softened that good-natured gentleman : and was so sweet and humble that the Servants' Hall was almost as charmed with her as the Drawing-room. As for the girls, they loved each other like sisters. Young unmarried girls always do, if they are in a house together for ten days.

" When I was a girl at school," said Amelia one night, " Joseph promised to take me to Vauxhall. Now, that Rebecca is with us, will be the very time."

" Oh, delightful ! " said Rebecca, going to clap her hands ; but she recollected herself, and paused, like a modest creature as she was.

" To-night is not the night," said Joe. " We'll go tomorrow."

"The girls must have a gentleman apiece," said Mr. Sedley. "Jos will be sure to leave Emmy in the crowd, he will be so taken up with Miss Sharp here. Send to 96, and ask George Osborne if he'll come."

At this, Mrs. Sedley looked at her husband and laughed. Mr. Sedley's eyes twinkled in a manner indescribably roguish, and he looked at Amelia; and Amelia, hanging down her head, blushed as only young ladies of seventeen know how to blush.

On the evening of the Vauxhall party, George Osborne having come to dinner, and the elders of the house having departed according to invitation, to dine with Alderman Balls at Highbury, there came on such a thunder-storm as obliged the young people, perforce, to remain at home. Mr. Osborne did not seem in the least disappointed at this occurrence. He and Joseph Sedley drank a fitting quantity of port wine, *tête à tête*, in the dining-room,—during the drinking of which Sedley told a number of his best Indian stories; for he was extremely talkative in man's society;—and afterwards Amelia did the honours of the drawing-room; and these four young persons passed such a comfortable evening together, that they declared they were rather glad of the thunder-storm, which had caused them to put off their visit to Vauxhall.

Osborne was Sedley's godson, and had been one of the family any time these three-and-twenty years. At six weeks old, he had received from John Sedley a present of a silver cup; at six months old, a coral with gold whistle

and bells ; from his youth, upwards, he was tipped regularly by the old gentleman at Christmas. In a word, George was as familiar with the family as such acts of kindness and intercourse could make him.

“ To-night I have been so happy,” said Rebecca, “ that I shall only be the sadder when—when I am gone.” And she dropped her voice, and she looked so sad and piteous, that everybody felt how cruel her lot was, and how sorry they would be to part with her.

“ Oh, that you could stay longer, dear Rebecca,” said Amelia.

“ Why ? ” answered the other, still more sadly. “ That I may be only the more unhappy—unwilling to lose you ? ” And she turned away her head. Amelia began to give way to that natural infirmity of tears which, as we have said, was one of the defects of this silly little thing. George Osborne looked at the two young women with a touched curiosity ; and Joseph Sedley heaved something very like a sigh out of his big chest.

“ Let us have some music, Miss Sedley—Amelia,” said George, who felt at that moment an irresistible impulse to seize the above-mentioned young woman in his arms, and to kiss her in the face of the company ; and she looked at him for a moment, and if I should say that they fell in love with each other at that single instant of time, I should perhaps be telling an untruth, for the fact is, that these two young people had been bred up by their parents for this very purpose, and their banns had, as it were,

been read in their respective families any time these ten years. They went off to the piano, which was situated in the back drawing-room, leaving Joseph *tête à tête* with Rebecca, at the drawing-room table, where the latter was netting a green silk purse.

"There is no need to ask family secrets," said Miss Sharp. "Those two have told theirs."

"As soon as he gets his company," said Joseph, "I believe the affair is settled. George is a capital fellow."

"And your sister the dearest creature in the world," said Rebecca. "Happy the man who wins her!" With this, Miss Sharp gave a great sigh.

When two unmarried persons get together, and talk upon such delicate subjects as the present, a great deal of confidence is presently established between them. Almost for the first time in his life, Mr. Sedley found himself talking without the least timidity to a person of the other sex. Miss Rebecca asked him a great many questions about India, which gave him an opportunity of narrating many interesting anecdotes about that country and himself. As he talked he grew quite bold, and actually had the audacity to ask Miss Rebecca for whom she was knitting the green silk purse. He was quite surprised and delighted at his own familiar manner.

"For any one who wants a purse," replied Rebecca, looking at him in a most gentle winning way. Sedley was going to make one of the most eloquent speeches possible, and had begun, "Oh, Miss Sharp, how—" when the music

in the other room ceased, and caused him to hear his own voice so distinctly that he stopped, blushed, and blew his nose in great agitation.

"Will you not sing to us, Miss Sharp," he said, hearing the others about to return

"Not now, Mr. Sedley," said Rebecca, with a sigh. "My spirits are not equal to it : besides I must finish the purse. Will you help me, Mr. Sedley ?" And before he had time to ask how, Mr. Joseph Sedley, of the East India Company's service, was actually seated *tête à tête* with a young lady, looking at her with a most killing expression ; his arms stretched out before her in an imploring attitude, and his hands bound in a web of green silk, which she was unwinding.

In this romantic position Osborne and Amelia found the interesting pair. The skein of silk was just wound round the card ; but Joseph had never spoken.

"I am sure he will tomorrow night, dear," Amelia said, as she pressed Rebecca's hand ; and Sedley, too, had communed with his soul, and said to himself, "Gad, I'll pop the question at Vauxhall."

When Lieutenant Osborne came to Russell Square on the day of the Vauxhall party he said, "Mrs. Sedley, ma'am, I hope you have room ; I've asked Dobbin of ours to come and dine here, and go with us to Vauxhall. He's almost as modest as Jos."

"Modesty ; pooh," said the stout gentleman, casting a *vainqueur* look at Miss Sharp.

"He is—but you are incomparably more graceful, Sedley," Osborne added, laughing, "I met him at the Bedford; and I told him that Miss Amelia was come home and that we were all bent on going out for a night's pleasuring; and that Mrs. Sedley had forgiven his breaking the punch-bowl at the children's party seven years ago. Don't you remember the catastrophe, ma'am?"

"What a gawky it was!" said good-natured Mrs. Sedley "And his sisters are not much more graceful. Lady Dobbin was at Highbury last night with three of them"

"There's not a finer fellow in the service," Osborne said, "nor a better officer, though he is not an Adonis, certainly." And he looked towards the glass himself with much simplicity; and in so doing, caught Miss Sharp's eye fixed keenly upon him, at which he blushed a little, and Rebecca thought, "Ah, my fine gentleman! I think I have your gauge"—the little artful minx.

That evening, when Amelia came tripping into the drawing-room in a white muslin frock, prepared for conquest at Vauxhall, singing like a lark, and as fresh as a rose, a very tall ungainly gentleman, with large hands and feet and large ears, set off by a closely-cropped head of black hair, advanced to meet her, and made her one of the clumsiest bows ever performed by a mortal.

This was no other than Captain William Dobbin, of His Majesty's —th Regiment of Foot, returned from the West Indies. He had arrived with a knock so very timid

and quiet, that it was inaudible to the ladies upstairs ; otherwise, you may be sure Miss Amelia would never have been so bold as to come singing into the room. As it was, the sweet fresh little voice went right into the captain's heart, and nestled there. When she held out her hand for him to shake, he paused and thought, " Well, is it possible—are you the little maid I remember in the pink frock, such a short time ago—the night I upset the punch bowl ? Are you the little girl that George Osborne said should marry him ? What a blooming young creature you seem, and what a prize the rogue has got !" All this he thought before he took Amelia's hand into his own, and as he let his hat fall.

Let us then step into the coach with the Russell Square party, and be off to Vauxhall Gardens. There is barely room between Jos and Miss Sharp, who are on the front seat : Mr. Osborne sitting opposite, between Captain Dobbin and Amelia.

The party was landed at the Gardens in due time. As the majestic Jos stepped out of the creaking vehicle the crowd gave a cheer for the fat gentleman, who blushed and looked very big and mighty, as he walked away with Rebecca under his arm. George, of course, took charge of Amelia. She looked as happy as a rose-tree in sunshine.

" I say, Dobbin," says George, " just look to the shawls and things, there's a good fellow." And so while the others paired off, honest Dobbin contented himself by giving an arm to the shawls, and by paying at the door for the whole party.

He walked very modestly behind them. He was not willing to spoil sport. About Rebecca and Jos he did not care a fig. But he thought Amelia worthy even of the brilliant George Osborne, and as he saw that good-looking couple threading the walks to the girl's delight and wonder, he watched her artless happiness with a sort of fatherly pleasure. Perhaps he felt that he would have liked to have something on his arm besides a shawl (the people laughed at seeing the gawky young officer carrying this female burden); but William Dobbin was very little addicted to selfish calculation at all; and so long as his friend was enjoying himself, how should he be discontented?

It is to be understood, of course, that our young people made the most solemn promises to keep together during the evening, and separated in ten minutes afterwards. Parties at Vauxhall always did separate, only to meet again at supper-time, when they could talk of their adventures in the interval.

What were the adventures of Miss Rebecca Sharp and her stout companion? When they lost themselves in a solitary walk, they both felt that the situation was extremely tender and critical. They had previously been to the panorama of Moscow, where a rude fellow, treading on Miss Sharp's foot, caused her to fall back with a little shriek into the arms of Mr. Sedley, and this little incident increased the tenderness and confidence of that gentleman to such a degree, that he told her his favourite Indian stories over again, for, at least, the sixth time.

“ How I should like to see India ! ” said Rebecca.

“ Should you ? ” said Joseph, with a most killing tenderness ; and was about to follow up this artful interrogatory by a question still more tender, when, oh, provoking, the bell rang for supper, and, a great scuffling and running taking place, these interesting lovers were obliged to follow.

Captain Dobbin had some thoughts of joining the party at supper : as, in truth, he found the Vauxhall amusement not particularly lively --but he paraded twice before the box where the now united couples were met, and nobody took any notice of him. Covers were laid for four. The mated pairs were prattling away quite happily, and Dobbin knew he was as clean forgotten as if he had never existed, and so he strolled off out of the hum of men, and noise, and the clatter of the banquet.

The two couples were perfectly happy then in their box. Jos was in his glory, ordering about the waiters with great majesty. He made the salad ; and uncorked the champagne ; and ate and drank the greater part of the refreshments on the table. Finally, he insisted upon having a bowl of rack punch ; everybody had rack punch at Vauxhall. That bowl of rack punch was the cause of all this history.

The young ladies did not drink it ; Osborne did not like it ; and the consequence was that Jos drank up the whole contents of the bowl ; and the consequence of his drinking up the whole contents of the bowl was a liveliness

which at first was astonishing, and then became painful; for he talked and laughed so loudly as to bring scores of listeners round the box; much to the confusion of the innocent party within it.

"For Heaven's sake, Jos, let us get up and go," cried Osborne, and the young women rose.

"Stop, my dearest diddle-diddle-darling," shouted Jos, now as bold as a lion, and clasping Rebecca round the waist. Rebecca started, but could not get away. The laughter outside redoubled; while Jos continued to drink, to make love, and to sing.

At this moment, by great good luck, Captain Dobbin stepped up to the box. "Be off, you fools!" said this gentleman to the crowd, who vanished before his fierce appearance, and he entered the box.

"Good Heavens! Dobbin, where *have* you been?" Osborne said, seizing the shawl from his friend's arm, and huddling up Amelia in it. — "Make yourself useful, and take charge of Jos here, whilst I take the ladies home."

George Osborne conducted the girls home in safety, and when the door was closed upon him, Amelia looked very ruefully at her friend, and kissed her, and went to bed without any more talking.

"He must propose tomorrow," thought Rebecca. "He called me his soul's darling four times; he squeezed my hand in Amelia's presence. He must propose tomorrow." And so thought Amelia too.

O, ignorant young creatures ! How little do you know the effect of rack punch ! The next morning, which Rebecca thought was to dawn upon her fortune, found Sedley in agonies which the pen refuses to describe. When the two officers called to see him, the collector of Boggley Wollah was groaning on the sofa at his lodgings.

All that day Jos never came. The next day, however, as the two young ladies sat on the sofa, pretending to work, or to read, the servant entered with a note. " From Mr. Joseph, Miss," he said.

How Amelia trembled as she opened it ! So it ran—

Dear Amelia,

I was too ill to come yesterday. I leave town to-day for Cheltenham. Pray excuse me, if you can, to the amiable Miss Sharp, for my conduct at Vauxhall, and entreat her to pardon and forget every word I may have uttered when excited by that fatal supper. As soon as I have recovered, for my health is very much shaken, I shall go to Scotland for some months, and am,

Truly yours,

Jos Sedley.

It was the death-warrant. All was over. Amelia did not dare to look at Rebecca's pale face and burning eyes, but she dropped the letter into her friend's lap ; and went upstairs to her room, and cried her little heart out.

CHAPTER III.

QUEEN'S CRAWLEY

Miss Rebecca Sharp to Miss Amelia Sedley, Russell Square, London.

My dearest, sweetest Amelia,

With what mingled joy and sorrow do I take up the pen to write to my dearest friend ! Oh, what a change between to-day and yesterday. Now I am friendless and alone ; yesterday I was at home, in the sweet company of a sister, whom I shall ever, ever cherish !

I will not tell you in what tears and sadness I passed the fatal night in which I separated from you. You went on Tuesday to joy and happiness, with your mother and your devoted young soldier by your side ; and I thought of you all night, dancing at the Perkins's, the prettiest, I am sure, of all the young ladies at the Ball. I was brought in the carriage to Sir Pitt Crawley's town house, where I was made to pass the night in an old gloomy bed I did not sleep one single wink the whole night.

Sir Pitt is not what we silly girls at Chiswick imagined a baronet must have been. Fancy an old, stumpy, short, vulgar, and very dirty man, in old clothes and shabby old gaiters, who smokes a horrid pipe, and speaks with a country accent. He swore a great deal at the hackney-coachman who drove us to the inn where the coach went from, and on which I made the journey *outside for the greater part of the way*.

I was awakened at daybreak, and having arrived at the inn, was at first placed inside the coach. But, when we got

to a place called Leakington, where the rain began to fall very heavily—will you believe it?—I was forced to come outside; for Sir Pitt is a proprietor of the coach, and as a passenger came for Mudbury, who wanted an inside place, I was obliged to go outside in the rain, where, however, a young gentleman from Cambridge sheltered me very kindly in one of his several great-coats

A carriage and four splendid horses, however, awaited us at Mudbury, four miles from Queen's Crawley, and we made our entrance in state. There is a fine avenue a mile long leading to the house. As we passed, I remarked a beautiful church-spire rising above some old elms in the park; and before them, in the midst of a lawn, an old red house with tall chimneys covered with ivy, and the windows shining in the sun. "Is that your church, sir?" I said.

"Yes, hang it," said Sir Pitt (only he used, dear, a much wickeder word). "Buty's the parson, my dear,—my brother Bute. Buty and the Beast I call him, ha, ha!" And I have no doubt from this that the brothers are at variance,—as brothers often are.

Before the house of Queen's Crawley, which is an old-fashioned red-brick mansion, with tall chimneys and gables of the style of Queen Bess, there is a terrace, on which the great hall-door opens. The great hall has a large fireplace, in which we might put half Miss Pinkerton's school, and the grate is big enough to roast an ox at the very least. Round the room hang I don't know how many generations of Crawleys, some with beards and ruffs, some with

huge wigs ; some dressed in long gowns that look as stiff as towers, and some with long ringlets. At one end is the great staircase all in black oak, as dismal as may be, and on either side are tall doors, leading to the billiard-room and the library, and the great yellow saloon and the morning rooms. I think there are at least twenty bedrooms on the first floor ; one of them has the bed in which Queen Elizabeth slept ; and I have been taken by my pupils through all these fine apartments this morning. They are not rendered less gloomy, I promise you, by having the shutters always shut. We have a schoolroom on the second floor, with my bedroom leading into it on one side, and that of the young ladies on the other. Then there are Mr. Pitt's apartments — Mr. Crawley, he is called — the eldest son, and Mr. Rawdon Crawley's rooms—he is an officer like *somebody*, and away with his regiment. There is no want of room, I assure you. You might lodge all the people in Russell Square in the house, I think, and have space to spare.

Half an hour after our arrival, the great dinner-bell was rung, and I came down with my two pupils (they are very thin insignificant little chits of ten and eight years old). I came down in your dear muslin gown, for I am to be treated as one of the family, except on company days, when the young ladies and I are to dine upstairs.

Well, the great dinner-bell rang, and we all assembled in the little drawing-room where my Lady Crawley sits. She is the second Lady Crawley, and mother of the young ladies. She was an ironmonger's daughter, and her

marriage was thought a great match. She looks as if she had been handsome once ; but now she is pale and meagre, and has not a word to say for herself. Her step-son, Mr. Crawley, was likewise in the room. He was in full dress, as pompous as an undertaker. He is pale, thin, ugly, silent ; he has thin legs, no chest, and straw-coloured hair.

"This is the new governess, Mr. Crawley," said Lady Crawley, coming forward and taking my hand ; "Miss Sharp."

"Oh," said Mr. Crawley, and pushed his head once forward, and began again to read a great pamphlet with which he was busy.

"I hope you will be kind to my girls," said Lady Crawley ; with her pink eyes full of tears.

"My lady is served," says the butler ; and so taking Mr. Crawley's arm, she led the way to the dining-room, whither I followed with my little pupils in each hand.

Sir Pitt was already in the room, and in full dress too ; that is, he had taken off his gaiters and showed his little dumpy legs in black worsted stockings. The sideboard was covered with gold plate—old cups, both gold and silver ; old salvers and cruet-stands. Everything on the table was silver.

Mr. Crawley said a long grace, and Sir Pitt said amen, and the silver dish-covers were removed.

"Will you take some *potage* ? Miss—ah—Miss Blunt," said Mr. Crawley.

“ Capital Scotch broth, my dear,” said Sir Pitt, “ though they call it by a French name.”

“ I believe it is the custom, sir, in decent society,” said Mr. Crawley, “ to call the dish as I have called it ; ” and it was served to us on silver soup-plates by footmen in canary coats, with the mutton. Then ale and water were brought and served to us young ladies in wine-glasses. I am not a judge of ale, but I can say with a clear conscience I prefer water.

When the repast was concluded a jug of hot water was placed before Sir Pitt, with a bottle of rum. The butler served myself and my pupils with three little glasses of wine, and a bumper was poured out for my lady. When we retired, she took up an interminable piece of knitting ; the young ladies began to play at cribbage with a dirty pack of cards ; and I had my choice of amusement between a volume of sermons, and a pamphlet on the corn-laws, which Mr. Crawley had been reading before dinner.

After an hour Mr. Crawley entered the room, and my pupils began to read in turn a long dismal sermon on behalf of the Chickasaw Indians. Was it not a charming evening ? At ten the servants were told to call Sir Pitt and the household to prayers. Sir Pitt came in first, very much flushed ; and after him the butler, the canaries, three other men smelling of the stable, and four women. After Mr. Crawley had done haranguing and expounding, we received our candles, and then we went to bed.

Good night. A thousand thousand kisses.

A hundred thousand grateful loves to your dear papa and mamma. Is your poor brother recovered of his rack punch? Oh dear! How men should beware of wicked punch!

Ever and ever thine own,
Rebecca.

Miss Rebecca Sharp to Miss Amelia Sedley.

I have not written to my beloved Amelia for these many weeks past, for what news was there to tell of the sayings and doings of Humdrum Hall, as I call it. Every day since I last wrote has been like its neighbour. Before breakfast, a walk with Sir Pitt; after breakfast, studies (such as they are) in the schoolroom: reading and writing about lawyers, leases, coal-mines, with Sir Pitt (whose secretary I am become); after dinner, Mr. Crawley's discourses or the Baronet's backgammon; during both of which amusements my lady looks on with equal placidity.

For some time past it is Humdrum Hall no longer. My dear, Miss Crawley has arrived, with her fat horses, fat servants, fat spaniel—the great rich Miss Crawley, with seventy thousand pounds in the five per cents, whom, or I had better say which, her two brothers adore. When she comes into the country our Hall is thrown open. We have dinner-parties, and drive out in the coach-and-four; we drink claret and champagne as if we were accustomed to it every day. We have wax-candles in the school-room, and fires to warm ourselves with. My pupils leave off their thick

shoes and old pelisses, and wear silk stockings and muslin frocks, as fashionable baronets' daughters should.

Another admirable effect is to be seen in the conduct of the two brothers, the baronet and the rector, who hate each other all the year round, and become quite loving at Christmas. When Miss Crawley arrives, there is no such thing as quarrelling heard of the Hall visits the Rectory, and vice versa—the parson and the baronet talk about county business in the most affable manner.

Our sermon books are shut up when Miss Crawley arrives, and Mr Pitt, whom she abominates, finds it convenient to go to town. On the other hand the young dandy, Captain Crawley, makes his appearance. He is a very large young dandy ; six feet high, and speaks with a great voice ; swears a great deal, and orders about the servants, who all adore him nevertheless ; for he is very generous with his money. He has a dreadful reputation among the ladies. He brings his hunters home with him, lives with the squires of the county, asks whom he pleases to dinner ; and Sir Pitt dare not say no, for the Captain is Miss Crawley's favourite.

One evening we actually had a dance, and he did me the honour to dance two country-dances with me. He says the country girls are bores ; indeed, I don't think he is far wrong. You should see the contempt with which they look down on poor me. When they dance I sit and play the piano very demurely ; but the other night coming in from the dining-room, and seeing me employed in this

way, the captain swore out loud I was the best dancer in the room, and that he'd have the fiddlers over from Mudbury.

"I'll play a country-dance," said Mrs. Bute Crawley (she is a little old woman, with very twinkling eyes), and after the captain and your poor little Rebecca had performed a dance together, she did me the honour to compliment me upon my steps ! She has all of a sudden taken a great fancy to me. "My dear Miss Sharp," she says, "why not bring your girls to the Rectory ?—their cousins will be so happy to see them." I know what she means. Signor Clementi did not teach us the piano for nothing ; at which price Mrs. Bute hopes to get a professor for her children. I can see through her schemes, as though she told them to me ; but I shall go, as I am determined to make myself agreeable— is it not a poor governess's duty, who has not a friend or protector in the world ? The rector's wife paid me a score of compliments about the progress my pupils made, and thought, no doubt, to touch my heart— poor, simple, country soul !— as if I cared a fig about my pupils !

Your Indian muslin and your pink silk, dearest Amelia, are said to become me very well. They are a good deal worn now, but, you know, we poor girls can't afford new frocks. Happy, happy you ! who have but to drive to St. James's Street, and a dear mother who will give you anything you ask. Farewell, dearest girl.

Your affectionate
Rebecca.

Miss Pinkerton to Mrs. Bute Crawley, the Rectory,
Queen's Crawley.

Dear Madam,

.....The Miss Sharp, whom you mention as govern-
ess to Sir Pitt Crawley, was a pupil of mine, and I have
nothing to say in her disfavour. Though her parents were
disreputable (her father being a painter, several times
bankrupt; and her mother, as I have since learned with
horror, a dancer at the Opera); yet her talents are con-
siderable, and I cannot regret that I received her out of
charity. My fear is, lest the principles of the mother—
who was represented to me as a French countess; but
who, as I have since found, was a person of the very
lowest order and morals—should at any time prove to be
hereditary in the unhappy young woman whom I took as
an outcast. But her principles have hitherto been correct
(I believe), and I am sure nothing will occur to injure
them in the elegant and refined circle of the eminent
Sir Pitt Crawley.....

With my most grateful respect to the Reverend Bute
Crawley, I have the honour to be, Dear Madam,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

Barbara Pinkerton.

CHAPTER IV

REBECCA'S HUSBAND

Rebecca had wisely determined to render her position
with the Queen's Crawley family comfortable and secure,

and to this end resolved to make friends of every one around her. She treated Lady Crawley with every demonstration of respect ; while with the young people, whose applause she thoroughly gained, her method was pretty simple. She did not pester their brains with too much learning, but on the contrary, let them have their own way in regard to educating themselves ; for what instruction is more effectual than self-instruction ! Miss Rose was rather fond of books, and they read together many delightful French and English works, including those of the learned Dr. Smollett, and of the ingenious Mr. Henry Fielding. Miss Violet's tastes were more boisterous. She could climb a tree like any boy, and her pleasure was to ride the young colts. She was the favourite of her father and the stablemen, and the terror of the cook, whose jampots she attacked. She and her sister were engaged in constant battles. Any of which peccadilloes if Miss Sharp discovered, she did not tell them, provided Miss Violet would be a good girl and love her governess.

With Mr. Crawley Rebecca was respectful and obedient. She used to consult him on passages of French which she did not understand, although her mother was a Frenchwoman ; and which he would construe to her satisfaction. She admired his pamphlet on malt ; and was often affected, even to tears, by his discourses of an evening, and would say—" Oh, thank you, sir," with a sigh, and a look up to heaven, that made him occasionally condescend to shake hands with her.

Rebecca found many different ways of being useful to the baronet. She read over all his law papers, and copied many of his letters. She became interested in everything pertaining to the estate ; and so delightful a companion was she, that he would seldom take his morning walk without her. Before she had been a year at Queen's Crawley she had quite won the baronet's confidence, and the conversation at the dinner table was now almost exclusively between Sir Pitt and Miss Sharp. She was almost mistress of the house when Mr. Crawley was absent, but conducted herself in her exalted station with such circumspection as to offend nobody.

Miss Crawley had not been long established at the Hall before Rebecca's fascinations had won her heart too. Rebecca accompanied her on her afternoon drives, and sat beside her at table. "Not let Miss Sharp dine at table !" said she to Sir Pitt. "Why, she's the only person fit to talk to in the county !"

Finally, Miss Rebecca Sharp had captured the captain. When she wrote to her beloved friend the account of the little ball at Queen's Crawley, and the manner in which Captain Crawley had distinguished her, she forgot to mention that he had distinguished her a great number of times before. He had met her on her walks, he had lighted upon her in the corridors. He had hung over the piano of an evening as Miss Sharp sang. He had written her notes (the best the great blundering dragoon could devise and spell). He gave up hunting ; he would not dine with the

mess at Mudbury : his great pleasure was to stroll over to Crawley Parsonage—whither Miss Crawley came too, and Miss Sharp with the children ; and of an evening some of the party would walk back together. Not Miss Crawley—she preferred her carriage—but the walk over the Rectory fields, and through the dark plantation, and up the chequered avenue to Queen's Crawley, was charming in the moonlight to two such lovers of the picturesque as the captain and Miss Rebecca.

A month later there drove up to a house in Park Lane a travelling chariot. It was the equipage of Miss Crawley, returning from Hampshire. Miss Sharp accompanied her. The old lady had been ill at Queen's Crawley, through a supper of hot lobsters at the Rectory, and Rebecca had nursed her so devotedly that Miss Crawley refused to part with her.

If the baronet of Queen's Crawley had not had the fear of losing his sister's legacy before his eyes, he never would have permitted Becky to depart. The old house seemed a desert without her, so useful and pleasant had she made herself there. His letters were not copied ; his household business and manifold schemes neglected, now that his little secretary was away. Almost every day brought a letter from the baronet, enclosing the most urgent prayers to Becky for her return, or conveying pathetic statements to Miss Crawley, regarding the neglected state of his daughters' education, of which documents Miss Crawley took very little heed.

When Miss Crawley was convalescent and descended to the drawing-room, Becky sang to her, and otherwise amused her; when she was well enough to drive out, Becky accompanied her. And amongst the drives which they took was one to Russell Square, Bloomsbury, and the house of John Sedley, Esquire.

Ere that event many notes had passed, as may be imagined, between the two dear friends; and when they met, they flew into each other's arms with that impetuosity which distinguishes the behaviour of young ladies towards each other. The first interview was but a short one. Amelia was just ready to go out for a walk, and Miss Crawley was waiting in her carriage below. When Amelia came down with her kind smiling looks, Miss Crawley was fairly captivated by the sweet blushing face of the young lady who came forward so timidly and so gracefully to pay her respects to the protector of her friend.

"What a complexion, my dear! What a sweet voice!" the old lady said, as they drove away westward. "My dear Sharp, your young friend is charming. Send for her to Park Lane, do you hear?" Miss Crawley liked natural manners—a little timidity only set them off. She liked pretty faces near her; as she liked pretty pictures and nice china. She talked of Amelia with rapture half a dozen times that day. She mentioned her to Rawdon Crawley, who came dutifully to partake of his aunt's chicken.

On this Rebecca stated that Amelia was engaged to be married—to a Lieutenant Osborne. She didn't know his regiment, but the captain's name was Dobbin.

"A lanky, gawky fellow," said Crawley, "tumbles over everybody. I know him; and Osborne's a goodish-looking fellow, with large black whiskers."

"Enormous," Miss Sharp said, "and enormously proud of them, I assure you."

"He fancies he can play billiards," the Captain said, laughing, "I won two hundred off him at the 'Cocoa-Tree.' Do let's have him here, ma'am, when you begin to see people; and his Whatdycallem—his inamorato—eh, Miss Sharp, comes? Gad, I'll write him a note, and try if he can play piquet as well as billiards."

It was arranged that Amelia was to spend the morning with the ladies of Park Lane, where all were very kind to her. Rebecca patronized her with calm superiority: she was so much the cleverer of the two, and her friend so gentle and unassuming, that she always yielded when anybody chose to command. Miss Crawley's graciousness was also remarkable. She continued her raptures about little Amelia, talked about her before her face as if she were a doll or a picture, and admired her with the most benevolent wonder possible.

George came to dinner—a bachelor repast with Captain Crawley. He was received with great frankness and graciousness: Captain Rawdon praised his play at billiards: asked him when he would have his revenge: and would have proposed piquet to him that very evening, but Miss Crawley absolutely forbade any gambling in her house. However, they made an engagement for the next; to dine

together, and to pass the evening with some jolly fellows. "That is, if you're not on duty to that pretty Miss Sedley," Crawley said, with a knowing wink. "Monstrous nice girl, 'pon my honour, though, Osborne."

Osborne wasn't on duty: he would join Crawley with pleasure. "By the by, how's little Miss Sharp?" he inquired of his friend over their wine, with a dandified air. "Good-natured little girl that. Does she suit you well at Queen's Crawley? Miss Sedley liked her a good deal last year."

Captain Crawley looked savagely at the lieutenant, and watched him when he went up to resume his acquaintance with the fair governess. Her conduct must have relieved Crawley if there was any jealousy in the bosom of that life-guardsmen.

Osborne walked up to Rebecca with a patronizing swagger. He was going to be kind to her. He would even shake hands with her, as a friend of Amelia's; and saying, "Ah, Miss Sharp: how-dy-doo?" held out his left hand towards her, expecting that she would be quite confounded at the honour. Miss Sharp put out her right forefinger,—and gave him a little nod, so cool and killing, that Rawdon Crawley, watching the operations from the other room, could hardly restrain his laughter as he saw the lieutenant's entire discomfiture. "She'd beat the devil, by Jove!" the captain said, in a rapture: and the lieutenant, by way of beginning the conversation, agreeably asked Rebecca how she liked her new place.

"My place?" said Miss Sharp, coolly, "how kind of you to remind me of it! It's a tolerably good place: the wages are pretty good—not so good as Miss Wirt's, I believe, with your sisters in Russell Square. We are not so wealthy in Hampshire as you lucky folks of the City. But then I am in a gentleman's family—good old English stock. And you see how I am treated. I am pretty comfortable. Indeed, it is rather a good place. But how very good of you to inquire!"

Osborne was quite savage. The little governess patronized him until this young British Lion felt quite uneasy. "I thought you liked the City families pretty well," he said haughtily.

"Last year, you mean, when I was fresh from that horrid vulgar school. Of course I did. But oh, Mr. Osborne, what a difference eighteen months' experience makes!—eighteen months spent, pardon me for saying so, with gentlemen. As for dear Amelia, she, I grant you, is a pearl, and would be charming anywhere."

Thus was George utterly routed. And he now shamefully fled, feeling if he stayed another minute, that he would have been made to look foolish in the presence of Amelia.

Next day, however, he could not help confiding to Captain Crawley some notions of his regarding Miss Rebecca—that she was a sharp one, a dangerous one, &c. "I only just warn you," he said, "I know women, and counsel you to be on the look-out."

"Thank you, my boy," said Crawley, with a look of peculiar gratitude. "You're wide-awake, I see." And George went off thinking Crawley was quite right.

He told Amelia of what he had done, and how he had counselled Crawley to be on his guard against that little sly, scheming Rebecca.

"Against *whom*?" Amelia cried.

"Your friend the governess — Don't look so astonished."

"Oh, George, what *have* you done?" Amelia said. For her woman's eyes, which Love had made sharp-sighted, had in one instant discovered a secret which was invisible to all the others. For as Rebecca was shawling her in an upper apartment, where these two friends had an opportunity for a little secret talking, Amelia, coming up to Rebecca, and taking her two little hands in hers, said, "Rebecca, I see it all."

Rebecca kissed her.

And regarding this delightful secret, not one syllable more was said by either of the young women. But it was destined to come out before long.

Some short period after the above events, and Miss Sharp still remaining in her patroness's house in Park Lane, a death occurred at Queen's Crawley, that of poor Rose Dawson, my Lady Crawley. Her stepson, Mr. Crawley, had tended that otherwise friendless bedside. She went out of the world strengthened by such words and comfort as he could give her. For many years his was the only kindness she ever knew; the only friendship that

solaced in any way that feeble, lonely soul. Her heart was dead long before her body. She had sold it to become Sir Pitt Crawley's wife. Mothers and daughters are making the same bargain every day in Vanity Fair.

When the death took place, her husband was in London, attending to some of his innumerable schemes. He had found time, nevertheless, to call often at Park Lane, entreating, enjoining, commanding Rebecca to return to Queen's Crawley. But Miss Crawley would not hear of her departure.

On the morrow, he called once more.

"My dear, I can't see him. I won't see him. My nerves won't really stand my brother at this moment," cried out Miss Crawley.

"She's too ill to see you, sir," Rebecca said, tripping down to Sir Pitt.

"So much the better," he replied, "I want to see *you*, Miss Becky. I want you back at Queen's Crawley."

"I hope to come soon," she said in a low voice, "as soon as Miss Crawley is better."

"You've said so these three months, Becky," replied Sir Pitt, "and still you go hanging on to my sister. I tell you I want you. I can't get on without you. I didn't see what it was till you went away. The house all goes wrong. All my accounts have got muddled. You must come back. Do come back ! Dear Becky, do come !"

"Come—as what, sir ?" Rebecca gasped out.

"Come as Lady Crawley, if you like. There, will that satisfy you? Come back and be my wife. You've got more brains in your little finger than any baronet's wife in the county. Will you come? Yes or no?"

"Oh, Sir Pitt," Rebecca said, very much moved.

"Say yes, Becky," Sir Pitt continued. "I'll make you happy, see if I don't. You shall do what you like; spend what you like; and have it all your own way. I'll do everything regular. Look here!" and the old man fell on his knees before her.

Rebecca started back, a picture of consternation. In the course of this history we have never seen her lose her presence of mind: but she did now, and wept some of the most genuine tears that ever fell from her eyes.

"Oh, Sir Pitt!" she said. "Oh, sir—I—I'm *married already*."

Captain Rawdon Crawley and Miss Rebecca Sharp were married quietly one morning when Rebecca had gone off to spend the day with her friend Amelia at Russell Square. After the above events they decided on flight, leaving a note for Miss Crawley. When that lady heard that her favourite Rawdon had married a governess—a nobody, she fell back in a faint. One fit of hysterics succeeded another. The doctor was sent for. Mrs. Bute left the Rectory to take up the post of nurse by her bedside. "Her relations ought to be round about her," that amiable woman said.

She had scarcely been put to bed when a new person arrived to whom it was also necessary to break the news.

This was Sir Pitt. "Where's Becky?" he said. "Where's her baggage? She's coming with me to Queen's Crawley."

"Have you not heard the astonishing intelligence regarding her surreptitious union?" said Miss Briggs, his sister's companion.

"What's that to me?" Sir Pitt asked. "I know she's married. That makes no odds. Tell her to come down at once and not keep me."

"Are you not aware," Miss Briggs asked, "that she has left our roof, to the dismay of Miss Crawley, who is nearly killed by the intelligence of Captain Rawdon's union with her?"

When Sir Pitt heard that Rebecca was married to his son, he broke out into a fury of language, which sent poor Briggs shuddering out of the room; and with her we will shut the door upon the figure of the frenzied old man, wild with hatred and insane with baffled desire.

"Suppose the old lady doesn't come round," Rawdon said to his little wife, as they sat together in their snug little Brompton lodgings.

"Suppose she doesn't come round, eh, Becky?"

"I'll make your fortune," she said; and Delilah patted Samson's cheek.

"You can do anything," he said, kissing the little hand. "By Jove, you can; and we'll drive down to the 'Star and Garter', and dine, by Jove."

CHAPTER V

DISASTER TO THE SEDLEYS

I am tempted to think that to be despised by her sex is a very great compliment to a woman.

The young ladies in Miss Amelia's society did this for her very satisfactorily. For instance, there was scarcely any point upon which the Misses Osborne and the Misses Dobbin agreed so well as in their estimate of her very trifling merits ; and their wonder that their brothers could find any charm in her " We are kind to her," the Misses Osborne said ; and they patronized her so insufferably that the poor little thing was in fact perfectly dumb in their presence, and to all outward appearance as stupid as they thought her. She made efforts to like them, as sisters of her future husband. She passed long mornings with them—the most serious and dreary of forenoons. She drove out solemnly in their great family-coach with them. Their house was comfortable ; their society solemn and genteel ; all their habits were pompous and orderly, and all their amusements intolerably dull and decorous. After every one of her visits (and oh how glad she was when they were over) they asked each other with increased wonder, " What could George find in that creature ? "

These two affectionate young women so frequently impressed upon George Osborne's mind the enormity of the sacrifice he was making, and his romantic generosity in throwing himself away upon Amelia, that I am not sure but that he really thought he was one of the most deserv-

ing characters in the British army, and gave himself up to be loved with a good deal of easy resignation.

As for Amelia, she loved with all her heart the young officer in His Majesty's service. She thought about him the very first moment on waking ; and his was the last name mentioned in her prayers. She had never seen a man so clever or so beautiful ; such a figure on horseback ; such a dancer ; such a hero in general. He was only good enough to be a fairy prince ; and oh, what magnanimity to stoop to such a humble Cinderella !

What were her parents doing, not to keep this little heart from beating so fast ? Old Sedley did not seem much to notice matters. He was graver of late, and his City affairs absorbed him. Mrs. Sedley was of so easy and uninquisitive a nature, that she wasn't even jealous. Mr. Jos was away, and Amelia had the house to herself—ah ! too much to herself, sometimes—not that she ever doubted ; for to be sure, George can't always get leave ; and he must see his friends and sisters, and mingle in society when in town ; and when he is with the regiment, he is too tired to write long letters.

One day Captain Dobbin called at Mr. Sedley's house, on pretence of seeing George of course, and George wasn't there, only poor little Amelia, with rather a wistful face, seated near the drawing-room window, who, after some very trifling talk, ventured to ask, was there any truth in the report that the regiment was soon to be ordered abroad ; and had Captain Dobbin seen Mr. Osborne that day ?

The regiment was not ordered abroad as yet ; and Captain Dobbin had not seen George. " He was with his sister, most likely," the Captain said. " Should he go and fetch the truant ? " So she gave him her hand kindly and gratefully : and he crossed the square : and she waited and waited, but George never came.

Poor little tender heart ! and so it goes on hoping and beating, and longing and trusting. I believe George was playing billiards with Captain Cannon at the time when Amelia was asking for him ; for George was a jolly sociable fellow, and excellent in all games of skill.

" You are neglecting a sweet girl, George," said Dobbin that night. " When you go to town you ought to go to her, and not to the gambling-houses about St. James's. If you could have seen poor little Miss Emmy's face when she asked me about you today, you would have pitched those billiard-balls to the deuce. Go and comfort her. Go and write her a long letter. Do something to make her happy ; a very little will."

" I believe she's very fond of me," the lieutenant said, with a self-satisfied air ; and went off to finish the evening with some jolly fellows in the mess-room.

The next day, however, young Osborne, to show that he would be as good as his word, went to see her, thereby incurring Captain Dobbin's applause. When he came to Russell Square, her face lighted up as if he had been sunshine. The little cares, fears, tears, timid misgivings, sleepless fancies of I don't know how many days and

nights were forgotten, under one moment's influence of that irresistible smile ; and as soon as the door was shut, she went fluttering to Lieutenant George Osborne's heart as if it was the only natural home for her to nestle in.

The young pair passed away a couple of hours very pleasantly ; and as the lieutenant had only a single day in town, and a great deal of important business to transact, it was arranged that Amelia should dine with her future sisters-in law. George conducted her to his sisters ; where he left her talking and prattling in a way that astonished those ladies, who thought that their brother might make something of her ; and he then went off to transact his business.

In a word he went out and ate ices at a pastrycook's shop in Charing Cross ; dropped in at the Old Slaughters' ; played eleven games at billiards there with Captain Cannon, of which he won eight, and returned to Russell Square half an hour late for dinner, but in a very good humour.

It was not so with old Mr. Osborne. When that gentleman came from the City, and was welcomed in the drawing-room by his daughters, they saw at once by his face—which was puffy, solemn, and yellow at the best of times—and by the scowl and twitching of his black eyebrows, that his heart was uneasy. When Amelia stepped forward to salute him, which she always did with great trembling and timidity, he gave no more than a surly grunt of recognition.

The reason of this was made clear when George and he were left together after dinner, when the old man said,

"George, I'll talk to you about a matter of importance. What I want to know is, how you and—ah—that little thing upstairs are carrying on?"

"I think it's not hard to see," George said, with a self-satisfied grin. I—ah—don't set up to be a lady-killer; but I do own that she's as fond of me as she can be."

"And you, yourself?"

"Why, sir, didn't you order me to marry her? Haven't our papas settled it ever so long? You and Mr. Sedley made the match a hundred years ago."

"I don't deny it, sir; but people's positions alter. I don't deny that Sedley made my fortune, or rather put me in the way of acquiring the proud position I occupy today in the tallow trade and the City of London. But, George! I tell you in confidence, I don't like the look of Sedley's affairs. They say the *Young Amelia* was his, which was sunk by the Americans. And that's flat,—unless I see Amelia's ten thousand down, you don't marry her."

That very evening Amelia wrote her lover the tenderest of long letters. Her heart was overflowing with tenderness, but it still foreboded evil. What was the cause of Mr. Osborne's dark looks? she asked. Had any difference arisen between him and her papa? Her poor papa returned so melancholy from the City, that all were alarmed about him at home—in fine, there were four pages of loves and fears and hopes and forebodings.

"Poor little Emmy—dear little Emmy. How fond she is of me," George said, as he perused the missive. Poor little Emmy, indeed.

If there is any exhibition in all Vanity Fair which Satire and Sentiment can visit arm-in-arm together ; where you light on the strangest contrasts, laughable and tearful ; where you may be gentle and pathetic, or savage and cynical, with perfect propriety : it is at a public sale. All who have attended these meetings must have thought, with a sensation and interest not a little startling and queer, of the day when their turn will come too.

It was rather late in the sale. Certain of the best wines had been purchased for his master, who knew them very well, by the butler of our friend, John Osborne, Esq., of Russell Square. A small portion of the most useful articles of the plate had been bought by some young stock-brokers from the City. And now the public were invited to the purchase of minor objects.

" No. 369," roared the auctioneer, " Portrait of a gentleman on an elephant. Who'll bid for the gentleman on the elephant ? "

A long, pale, military-looking gentleman, seated at the table, could not help grinning as the picture was exhibited (for the elephant-rider was represented as a very stout figure).

Some one bid five shillings, at which the military gentleman looked towards the quarter from which this splendid offer had come, and there saw another officer with a young lady on his arm, who both appeared to be highly amused with the scene, and to whom, finally, the lot was knocked down for half a guinea. He at the table looked

more surprised and discomposed than ever, and he turned his back, so as to avoid them.

Of all the other articles put up for auction it is our purpose to mention one only, a little square piano, which came down from the upper regions of the house. This the young lady tried with a rapid and skilful hand, and for it when its turn came, her agent began to bid.

But there was opposition here. The aide-de-camp in the service of the officer at the table bid against the gentleman employed by the elephant purchasers, and a brisk battle ensued over this little piano, the combatants being greatly encouraged by the auctioneer.

At last the elephant captain and lady desisted from the race, and the officer became the proprietor of the little square piano. Having effected the purchase, he sat up as if greatly relieved, and the lady catching a glimpse of him, said to her friend,

“Why, Rawdon, it’s Captain Dobbin.”

The sale was at the old house in Russell Square. Good old John Sedley was a ruined man. His name had been proclaimed as a defaulter on the Stock Exchange, and his bankruptcy had followed. Mr. Osborne’s butler came to buy some of the famous port wine. As for the silver forks and spoons, there were three young stockbrokers, who having had kindnesses from the old man in days when he was kind to everybody with whom he dealt, sent this little spar out of the wreck with their love to good Mrs. Sedley ; and with respect to the piano, as it had been Amelia’s, and

as she might miss it and want one now, and as Captain William Dobbin could no more play upon it than he could dance on the tight-rope, it is probable that he did not purchase the instrument for his own use.

In a word, it arrived that evening at a wonderful small cottage in Fulham Road. Here it was that Mr. Clapp, the clerk of Mr. Sedley, had his domicile, and in this asylum the good old gentleman hid his head with his wife and daughter when the crash came.

Jos Sedley had acted as a man of his disposition would, when the announcement of the family misfortune reached him. He did not come to London, but he wrote to his mother to draw upon his agents for whatever money was wanted, so that his kind broken-hearted old parents had no present poverty to fear. This done, Jos went on at Cheltenham pretty much as before. His present of money, needful as it was, made little impression on his parents ; and I have heard Amelia say, that the first day on which she saw her father lift up his head after the failure, was on the receipt of the packet of forks and spoons with the young stockbrokers' love, over which he burst out crying like a child, being greatly more affected that even his wife, to whom the present was addressed.

Of all Sedley's opponents in his debates with his creditors which now ensued, and harassed the feelings of the humiliated old gentleman so severely, that in six weeks he aged more than he had done for fifteen years before—the most determined and obstinate was John Osborne, his old

friend and neighbour —John Osborne, whom he had set up in life—who was under a hundred obligations to him—and whose son was to marry his daughter. Any one of these circumstances would account for the bitterness of Osborne's opposition. Had he not to break off the match, and to show the strongest reasons for the rupture, by proving John Sedley a very bad character indeed !

When the crash came, a brutal letter from old Osborne told Amelia in a few curt lines that her father's conduct had been of such a nature that all engagements between the families were at an end. She took the news very palely and calmly. It was only the confirmation of the dark presages which had long gone before. As for old Sedley, he cursed Osborne and his family as 'heartless, wicked, and ungrateful. No power on earth, he swore, would induce him to marry his daughter to the son of such a villain, and he ordered Emmy to banish George from her mind, and to return all the presents and letters which she had ever had from him.

Three days afterwards, Dobbin found Osborne in his room at the barracks—his head on the table, a number of papers about, the young captain evidently in a state of great despondency. "She's sent me back some things I gave her—some damned trinkets. Look here!" There was a little packet directed in the well-known hand to Captain George Osborne, and some things lying about—a ring, a silver knife he had bought, as a boy, for her at a fair ; a gold chain, and a locket with hair in it. "It's all

over," said he, with a groan of sickening remorse. "Look, Will, you may read it if you like."

There was a little letter of a few lines, which said : —

My papa has ordered me to return to you these presents, which you made in happier days to me; and I am to write to you for the last time. I think, I know you feel as much as I do the blow which has come upon us. It is I that absolve you from an engagement which is impossible in our present misery. I am sure you had no share in it, or in the cruel suspicions of Mr. Osborne, which are the hardest of all our griefs to bear. Farewell. Farewell. I pray God to strengthen me to bear this and other calamities, and to bless you always.

I shall often play upon the piano—your piano. It was like you to send it. A.

"Where are they?" Osborne asked, after a long talk, and a long pause,—and, in truth, with no little shame at thinking that he had taken no steps to follow her. Dobbin knew. He had not only sent the piano, but had seen Mrs. Sedley and Amelia the day before; and, what is more, he had brought that farewell letter and packet which had so moved them.

Her appearance was so ghastly, and her look of despair so pathetic, that honest William Dobbin was frightened as he beheld it; and read the most fatal forebodings in that pale fixed face. After sitting in his company a minute or two, she put the packet into his hand, and said, "Take this

to Captain Osborne, if you please, and—and I hope he's quite well,—and I think I'll go upstairs, mamma, for I'm not very strong." And with this, and a smile, the poor child went her way. The mother, as she led her up, cast back looks of anguish towards Dobbin. The good fellow wanted no such appeal. He loved her himself too fondly for that. Inexpressible grief, and pity, and terror pursued him, and he came away as if he was a criminal after seeing her.

When Osborne heard that his friend had found her, he made hot and anxious inquiries regarding the poor child. How was she? How did she look? What did she say? His comrade took his hand, and looked him in the face.

"George, she's dying," he said,—and could say no more.

Four hours later the servant-maid came into Amelia's room, where she sat as usual, brooding silently over her letters. "Miss Emmy," said the girl. "I'm coming," Emmy said, not looking round. "There's a message," the maid went on, "There's something,—somebody, here's a new letter for you—don't be reading these old ones any more." And she gave her a letter, which Emmy took, and read.

"I must see you," the letter said. "Dearest Emmy—dearest love—dearest wife, come to me."

George and her mother were outside, waiting until she had read the letter.

CHAPTER VI

AMELIA'S MARRIAGE

A day or so later, and a short time before the hour of dinner, George Osborne was lolling upon a sofa in the drawing-room, in a very becoming and perfectly natural attitude of melancholy. He had been to pass three hours with Amelia, his dear little Amelia, at Fulham ; and he came home to find his sisters spread in starched muslin in the drawing-room, talking about fashions until he was perfectly sick of their chatter. He contrasted their behaviour with little Emmy's—their shrill voices with her tender ringing tones ; their attitudes and their elbows and their starch, with her humble soft movements and modest graces. Then he heard her name in conversation, and George bounced up.

"No one will say a word against Miss Sedley in my hearing," he cried. "I say she's the best, the kindest, the gentlest, the sweetest girl in England ; and that, bankrupt or no, you are not fit to hold candles to her. She wants friends now ; and I say, God bless everybody who befriends her."

"You know you're not to speak about her, George," cried one of the sisters. "Papa forbids it."

"I say," George said fiercely, "Anybody who speaks kindly of Amelia Sedley is my friend ; anybody who speaks against—" He stopped. Old Osborne was in the room with a face livid with rage, and eyes like hot coals.

Though George had stopped in his sentence, yet, his blood being up, he was not to be cowed by all the genera-

tions of Osborne; rallying instantly, he replied to the bullying look of his father with another indicative of resolution and defiance. He felt that the tussle was coming; and during dinner, rattled on with a volubility which surprised himself, and made his father doubly nervous for the fight that was to take place. It made him mad to see the calm way in which George, flapping his napkin, and with a swaggering bow, opened the door for the ladies to leave the room; and, filling himself a glass of wine, looked his father full in the face.

After giving a great heave, and with a purple choking face, Osborne then began. "How dare you, sir, mention that person's name in my drawing-room?"

"It wasn't I, sir, that introduced Miss Sedley's name. It was my sisters. But, by Jove, I'll defend her wherever I go. Nobody shall speak lightly of that name in my presence. Our family has done her quite enough injury already, I think, and may leave off reviling her now she's down."

"Go on, sir, go on," the old gentleman said, his eyes starting out of his head.

"Go on about what, sir? about the way we've treated that angel of a girl? Who told me to love her? It was your doing. And now that her heart's mine, you give me orders to fling it away, and punish her, kill her perhaps—for the fault of other people. It's a shame, by Heavens," said George, working himself up into passion and enthusiasm as he proceeded, "to play fast and loose with a young

girl's affections—and with such an angel as that—so good and gentle that it's a wonder anybody dared to hate her. If I desert her, sir, do you suppose she forgets me ? ”

“ I'm not going to have any of this sentimental nonsense and humbug here,” the father cried out. “ There shall be no beggar marriages in my family. If you choose to marry her, you may do it ; but, by Jove, you take your pack and walk out of this house, sir. Will you do as I tell you, sir, or will you not ? ”

“ I'll marry her tomorrow,” said George, “ I love her more every day.”

Mr. Osborne pulled frantically at the cord by which he was accustomed to summon the butler—and, almost black in the face, ordered that functionary to call a coach for Captain Osborne.

One gusty, raw day at the end of April,—the rain whipping the pavements of the streets—two gentlemen drove down by Brompton to a certain church near the Fulham Road there. A chariot was in waiting with four horses ; likewise a coach of the kind called glass coaches. Only a very few idlers were collected on account of the dismal rain.

“ Here you are,” said our old friend, Jos Sedley, coming forward. “ You're five minutes late, George, my boy. What a day, eh ? It's like the beginning of the rainy season in Bengal. But you'll find my carriage is water-tight. Come along, my mother and Emmy are in the vestry.”

In a word, George Osborne had thrown the great cast. He was going to be married.

The bride was dressed in brown silk (as Captain Dobbin has since informed me), and wore a straw bonnet with a pink ribbon; over the bonnet she had a veil of white Chantilly lace, a gift from her brother; Captain Dobbin had asked leave to present her with a gold watch and chain, which she sported on this occasion; and her mother gave her a diamond brooch—almost the only trinket that was left to the old lady. As the service went on, Mrs. Sedley sat and whimpered in the pew. Old Sedley would not be present. Jos acted for his father, giving away the bride, whilst Captain Dobbin stepped up as groomsman to his friend George.

When the service was completed, Jos Sedley came forward and kissed his sister, the bride, for the first time for many months. George looked quite proud and radiant. "It's your turn, William," says he, putting his hand fondly on Dobbin's shoulder; and Dobbin went up and touched Amelia on the cheek.

Then they went into the vestry and signed the register. "God bless you, Old Dobbin," George said, grasping him by the hand, with something very like moisture glistening in his eyes. "Write directly, and come down to Brighton as soon as you can, you know." William replied only by nodding his head. His heart was too full to say much.

Some ten days after the above ceremony, three young men of our acquaintance were enjoying that beautiful prospect of blue sea which Brighton affords to the traveller.

"What a fine girl that is in the lodgings over the milliner's," one of these three promenaders remarked ; " By Jove, Crawley, did you see her smile ? "

" Don't break her heart, Jos, you rascal," said another. " Don't trifle with her affections, you Don Juan."

" Get away," said Jos Sedley, quite pleased. Jos was more splendid than ever. He sported a military frock-coat, ornamented with black buttons and meandering embroidery. He had affected a military appearance and habits of late, and he walked with his two friends who were of that profession, clinking his boot-spurs, and swaggering prodigiously.

" What shall we do till the ladies return ? " he asked. The ladies were out in his carriage for a drive.

" Let's have a game of billiards," said the tall officer with the moustaches.

" No, no, captain," Jos replied, rather alarmed. " No billiards today, Crawley my boy ; yesterday was enough."

" Suppose we go and see the coach come in, it's just about time," said George Osborne. And they turned towards the coach-office.

As they passed they met Jos Sedley's magnificent open carriage. Two ladies were in it : one a little person, with light hair, and dressed in the height of fashion : the other in brown silk, and a straw bonnet with pink ribbons, and a rosy, round, happy face. She checked the carriage as it neared the three gentlemen. " We have had a delightful drive, George," she said, " and—and we're so glad to come back ; and Joseph, don't let him be late."

“ Don’t be leading our husbands into mischief, Mr. Sedley, you wicked, wicked man,” Rebecca said, shaking at Jos a pretty little finger. “ No billiards, no smoking, no naughtiness ! ”

“ My dear Mrs. Crawley— Ah now ! upon my honour ! ” was all Jos could ejaculate by way of reply ; but as the carriage drove off, he kissed his hand to the fair ladies within. He wished all Chowringhi, all Calcutta, could see him waving his hand to such a beauty, and in company with such a famous dandy as Rawdon Crawley of the Guards.

Our young bride and bridegroom had chosen Brighton as the place where they would pass the first few days after their marriage ; and there Jos presently joined them. Nor was he the only companion they found there. On returning from a seaside walk one afternoon, on whom should they light but Rebecca and her husband. The ladies flew into each other’s arms. Crawley and Osborne shook hands together cordially enough.

These two young couples had plenty to say to each other. The marriages of either were discussed ; and their prospects in life canvassed with the greatest frankness and interest on both sides. George’s marriage was to be made known to his father by his friend Captain Dobbin ; and young Osborne trembled rather for the result of that communication. Miss Crawley, on whom all Rawdon’s hopes depended, still held out. Unable to make an entry into her house in Park Lane, her affectionate nephew and niece had followed her to Brighton.

The two wedding parties met constantly in each other's apartments. After two or three nights the gentlemen of an evening had a little piquet, as their wives sat and chatted apart. This pastime, and the arrival of Jos Sedley, who played a few games of billiards with Captain Crawley, replenished Rawdon's purse somewhat, and gave him the benefit of that ready money for lack of which the greatest spirits are sometimes at a standstill.

So the three gentlemen walked down to see the coach come in. Punctual to the minute, the guard blowing his accustomed tune on the horn, it came tearing down the street, and pulled up at the coach-office.

"Hullo! there's old Dobbin," George cried. "How are you, old fellow? Glad you're come down. Emmy'll be delighted to see you," he said, shaking his comrade warmly by the hand as soon as his descent from the vehicle was effected—and then he added, in a lower and agitated voice, "What's the news? Have you been to Russell Square? What does my father say? Tell me everything."

Dobbin looked very pale and grave. "I've seen your father," said he. "How's Amelia? I'll tell you all the news presently: but I've brought the great news of all: and that is —"

"Out with it, old fellow," said George.

"We're ordered to Belgium. All the army goes—Guards and all. We embark from Chatham next week. Napoleon's army is in the field."

This news of war could not but come with a shock upon our lovers, and caused all these gentlemen to look very grave.

When George and Dobbin were alone in the latter's room, to which George had followed him, Dobbin took from his desk the letter which he had been charged by Mr. Osborne to deliver to his son. "It's not in my father's handwriting," said George, looking rather alarmed : nor was it : the letter was from Mr. Osborne's lawyer, and to the following effect : —

Bedford Row, 7th May, 1815.

Sir,

I am commissioned by Mr. Osborne to inform you that he abides by the determination which he before expressed to you, and that in consequence of the marriage which you have been pleased to contract, he ceases to consider you henceforth as a member of his family. This determination is final and irrevocable

Although the moneys expended upon you in your minority, and the bills which you have drawn upon him so unsparingly of late years, far exceed in amount the sum to which you are entitled in your own right (being the third part of the fortune of your mother, the late Mrs. Osborne, and which reverted to you at her decease); yet I am instructed by Mr. Osborne to say, that he waives all claim upon your estate, and that the sum of £2,000, 4 per cent. annuities, at the value of the day, shall be

paid over to yourself or your agents upon your receipt for the same, by

Your obedient Servant,
S. Higgs.

CHAPTER VII.

AMELIA JOINS HER REGIMENT

Upon leaving Brighton Amelia had a few days in London to bid good-bye to her father and mother, after which she drove with her brother to Chatham to join her husband and her regiment. When Jos's fine carriage drove up to the inn-door there, the first face which Amelia recognized was the friendly countenance of Captain Dobbin, who had been pacing the street for an hour past in expectation of his friends' arrival.

Along with the captain was Ensign Stubble ; who, as the carriage neared the inn, exclaimed. "By Jove ! what a pretty girl" ; highly applauding Osborne's choice. Indeed Amelia, with a flush on her face, occasioned by rapid travel through the open air, looked so fresh and pretty, as fully to justify the Ensign's compliment. He made the best bow of which he was capable ; to which Amelia, seeing the number of her husband's regiment embroidered on the Ensign's cap, replied with a blushing smile, which finished the young officer on the spot. It became the fashion, indeed, among all the honest young fellows of the —th to adore and admire Mrs. Osborne. Her simple artless behaviour, and modest kindness of demeanour, won all

their unsophisticated hearts : while George rose immensely in their opinion by his gallantry in marrying this portionless young creature, and by his choice of such a pretty kind partner.

They had not been many minutes in their sitting-room at the inn, when the door was flung open, and a stout jolly lady entered the room, followed by a couple of officers.

"Sure, I couldn't wait. Present me, George, my dear fellow, to your lady. Madam, I'm delighted to see you ; and to present to you my husband, Major O'Dowd. Introduce me to your brother now ; sure he's a mighty fine man, and reminds me of my cousin, Dan Malony. Mr. Sedley, sir, I'm delighted to be made known to you. I suppose you'll dine at the mess to-day."

"It's the 150th gives us a farewell dinner, my love," interposed the major, "but we'll easily get a card for Mr. Sedley."

"Run, Stubble. Run in a hurry, with Mrs. Major O'Dowd's compliments to Colonel Tavish, and say that Captain Osborne has brought his brother-in-law down, and will bring him to the 150th mess this evening — when you and I will take a snack here, my dear." Before Mrs. O'Dowd's speech was concluded, the young ensign was trotting downstairs on his commission.

"Obedience is the soul of the army. We will go to our duty while Mrs. O'Dowd will stay and enlighten you,
V. F.—5

Emmy," Captain Osborne said; and the two captains, taking each an arm of the Major, walked out with that officer, grinning at each other over his head. •

And now having her new friend to herself, the impetuous Mrs. O'Dowd proceeded to pour out such a quantity of information as no poor little woman's memory could ever tax itself to bear. She told Amelia a thousand particulars relative to the very numerous family of which the amazed young lady found herself a member; with Mrs. O'Dowd as an elder sister. She was presented to her other female relations at tea-time, on whom, as she was quiet and good-natured, she made rather an agreeable impression.

Upon the arrival of the gentlemen from the mess of the 150th, they all, like the good fellows they were, rallied round their comrade's pretty wife, and paid her their court with soldierly gallantry. She had a little triumph, which flushed her spirits and made her eyes sparkle. George was proud of her popularity, and pleased with the manner (which was very gay and graceful, though naïve and a little timid) with which she received the gentlemen's attentions, and answered their compliments. And he in his uniform—how much handsomer he was than any man in the room! She felt that he was affectionately watching her, and glowed with pleasure at his kindness. "I will make all his friends welcome," she resolved in her heart. "I will love all who love him. I will always try to be gay and good-humoured and make his home happy."

The regiment indeed adopted her with acclamation. The captains approved, the lieutenants applauded, the ensigns admired. As for Captain Dobbin, he never so much as spoke to her the whole evening. But he and Captain Porter of the 150th took home Jos to the inn, who was in a very maudlin state and had told his tiger-hunt story with great effect at the mess-table. Having put the collector into the hands of his servant, Dobbin loitered about, smoking his cigar before the inn-door. George had meanwhile very carefully shawled his wife, and brought her away after a general hand-shaking from the young officers, who accompanied her to the carriage, and cheered her as it drove off. So Amelia gave Dobbin her little hand as she got out of the carriage, and rebuked him smilingly for not having taken any notice of her all night.

The captain continued that deleterious amusement of smoking, long after the inn and the street were gone to bed. He watched the lights vanish from George's windows. It was almost morning when he returned to his own quarters. He could hear the cheering from the ships in the river, where the transports were already taking in their cargoes.

The regiment with its officers was to be transported in ships provided by His Majesty's government; and two days after the festive assembly in Mrs. O'Dowd's apartments, in the midst of cheering from all the ships in the river, and the military on shore, the band playing "God save the King," the transports proceeded to Ostend. Meanwhile the gallant Jos had agreed to escort his sister

and the Major's wife ; and they drove to Ramsgate, where there were plenty of packets plying, in one of which they made a speedy passage to Ostend.

That period of Jos's life which now ensued was so full of incident, that it served him for conversation for many years after, and even the tiger-hunt story was put aside for more stirring narratives which he had to tell about the great campaign of Waterloo. It was remarked that he had ceased to shave his upper lip. He listened with the utmost attention to the conversation of his brother-officers (as he called them in afterdays sometimes), and learned as many military names as he could ; and on the day they embarked he made his appearance in a braided frock-coat, with a forage cap ornamented with a gold band. Everybody mistook him for a great personage, a commissary-general at the very least.

He suffered hugely on the voyage, during which the ladies were likewise prostrate ; but Amelia was brought to life again as the vessel made Ostend, by the sight of the transports conveying her regiment, which entered the harbour almost at the same time. Jos went in a collapsed state to an inn, while Captain Dobbin escorted the ladies ; and procured for Jos a swarthy little Belgian servant, who, by invariably addressing Mr. Sedley as ' My lord,' speedily acquired that gentleman's favour.

The regiment was drafted in canal-boats to Bruges and Ghent, thence to march to Brussels. Jos accompanied the ladies in the public boats ; and his comfort was exceeding.

He sat on the roof of the cabin all day drinking Flemish beer, shouting for Isidor his servant, and talking gallantly to the ladies. His courage was prodigious. "Boney attack us!" he cried. "My poor Emmy, don't be frightened. There's no danger. The allies will be in Paris in two months, I tell you. Hey, Mrs. O'Dowd? Do you think our little girl here need be afraid?"

Mrs. O'Dowd said that she was not afraid of any man alive, let alone a Frenchman, and tossed off a glass of beer with a wink which expressed her liking for the beverage.

Jos was rather a favourite with the regiment, treating the young officers with sumptuousness, and amusing them by his military airs. And as there is one well-known regiment which travels with a goat heading the column, whilst another is led by a deer, George said with respect to his brother-in-law, that his regiment marched with an elephant.

When our travellers arrived at Brussels, they found themselves in one of the gayest and most brilliant little capitals in Europe. Gambling was here in profusion, and dancing in plenty: feasting was there to delight that great gourmand of a Jos; there was a rare old city, with strange costumes and wonderful architecture, to delight the eyes of little Amelia, who had never before seen a foreign country: so that for a few weeks space, Mrs. Amelia was as pleased and happy as any little bride out of England. Her letters home to her mother were filled with delight and gratitude at this season. Her husband bade her buy laces, millinery, and jewels of all sorts. Oh, he was the kindest, best, and most generous of men!

But one day as our friends were sauntering in the flower-market of Brussels, having been to see the Hotel de Ville, an officer of rank, with an orderly behind him, rode up to the market, and descending from his horse, selected the very finest bouquet which money could buy. The beautiful bundle being tied up in paper, the officer remounted, giving the nosegay into the charge of his military groom, who carried it with a grin, following his chief, who rode away in great state and self-satisfaction.

"It's General Tufto, who commands the —cavalry division," said Major O'Dowd.

"General Tufto!" said George. "Then, my dear, the Rawdon Crawleys are come."

Amelia's heart fell—she knew not why. The sun did not seem to shine so bright. The tall old roofs and gables looked less picturesque all of a sudden, though it was a brilliant sunset, and one of the brightest and most beautiful days at the end of May.

Jos had hired a pair of horses for his carriage, and George and Captain Dobbin would often accompany on horseback the carriage in which Jos and his sister took daily excursions of pleasure. They went out next day in the park for their accustomed diversion, and there, sure enough, George's remark with regard to the arrival of the Crawleys proved to be correct. In the midst of a little troop of horsemen, consisting of some of the greatest persons in Brussels, Rebecca was seen in the prettiest of riding-habits, mounted on a beautiful little Arab, which she

rode to perfection (having acquired the art at Queen's Crawley, where the baronet, Mr. Pitt, and Rawdon himself had given her many lessons), and by her side the gallant General Tufto.

Rebecca did not make for the carriage; but, as soon as she perceived her old acquaintance, Amelia, seated in it, acknowledged her presence by a gracious word and smile, and by kissing and shaking her fingers playfully in the direction of the vehicle. But Rawdon Crawley rode out of the ranks of his company, and came up and shook hands heartily with Amelia, and said to Jos, "Well, old boy, how are you?"

George, who had been delayed behind, rode up almost immediately with Dobbin, and was delighted to see Rawdon leaning over his carriage familiarly and talking to Amelia; and he met the aide-de-camp's cordial greeting with more than corresponding warmth. The nods between Rawdon and Dobbin were of the very faintest specimens of politeness.

"Mrs. O'Dowd's been useful to you, my dear," said George that night to his wife; "but what a comfort it is that Rebecca's come. You'll have her for a friend now, and we may get rid of this Irishwoman." To this Amelia did not answer, yes or no: and how do we know what her thoughts were?

"When do you intend to give up play, George, as you have promised me any time these hundred years?" Dobbin

said to his friend some days later. "When do you intend to give up sermonizing?" was the other's reply. "What are you alarmed about? We play low; I won last night. You don't suppose Crawley cheats?"

"I don't think he could pay if he lost," Dobbin said; and his advice met with the success which advice usually commands. Osborne and Crawley were repeatedly together. George was always welcome in the apartments which the aide-de-camp and his wife occupied in the hotel.

Amelia's manners were such when she and George visited Crawley and his wife at these quarters, that they had very nearly come to their first quarrel; that is, George scolded his wife violently for her evident unwillingness to go, and the high and mighty manner in which she comported herself towards Mrs. Crawley, her old friend; and Amelia did not say one single word in reply; but with her husband's eye upon her, and Rebecca scanning her, was, if possible, more bashful and awkward on the second visit, than on her first call.

As Emmy did not say much or plague him with her jealousy, but merely pined over it in secret, George Osborne chose to fancy that she was not suspicious of what all his acquaintance were perfectly aware—namely, that he was carrying on a desperate flirtation with Mrs. Crawley. He rode with her whenever he was free. He pretended regimental business to Amelia (by which falsehood she was

not in the least deceived) and consigning his wife to solitude or her brother's society, passed his evenings in the Crawleys' company : losing money to the husband and flattering himself that the wife was dying of love for him. It is very likely that this worthy couple never absolutely conspired and agreed together in so many words : the one to capole the young gentleman, whilst the other won his money : but they understood each other perfectly well, and Rawdon let Osborne come and go with entire good humour. Our friend George was in the full career of the pleasures of Vanity Fair.

CHAPTER VIII

WATERLOO

A certain ball which a noble duchess gave at Brussels, on the 15th of June, 1815, is historical. All Brussels had been in a state of excitement about it ; and the struggles, intrigues, and prayers to get tickets were tremendous. Jos and Mrs. O'Dowd, who were panting to be asked, strove in vain to procure tickets ; but others of our friends were more lucky. For instance, George got a card for Captain and Mrs. Osborne ; which circumstance greatly elated him. Dobbin, who was a friend of the general commanding their division, came laughing one day, and displayed a similar invitation. Mr. and Mrs. Rawdon finally, were of course invited ; as became the friends of General Tufto.

On the appointed night George drove to the famous ball, where his wife did not know a single soul. After

placing her on a bench, he left her to her own cogitations there, thinking, on his own part, that he had behaved very handsomely in bringing her to the ball, where she was free to amuse herself as she liked. Her thoughts were not of the pleasantest, and nobody except honest Dobbin came to disturb them.

While her appearance was an utter failure (as her husband felt with a sort of rage), Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's debut was, on the contrary, very brilliant. She arrived late. Her face was radiant, her dress perfection. Numbers of the men she knew already, and the dandies thronged round her, and pressed to have the honour to dance with her. But she said she was going to dance very little, and made her way to the place where Emmy sat quite unnoticed, and dismally unhappy. And so, to finish the poor child at once, Mrs. Rawdon ran and greeted affectionately her dearest Amelia, and began forthwith to patronize her.

George very soon found his way back to Amelia when Rebecca was by her dear friend's side. Becky was just lecturing Mrs. Osborne upon the follies which her husband was committing. "For God's sake, stop him from gambling, my dear," she said, "or he will ruin himself. He and Rawdon are playing at cards every night, and Rawdon will win every shilling from him if he does not take care. Ah, here he comes! Where have you been, wretch? Here is Emmy crying her eyes out for you. Are you come to fetch me for the quadrille?" And she left her bouquet and shawl by Amelia's side, and tripped off with George to dance. Women only know how to wound so

George danced with Rebecca twice or thrice—how many times Amelia scarcely knew. She sat quite unnoticed in her corner, except when Rawdon came up with some words of clumsy conversation : and later in the evening, when Captain Dobbin made so bold as to bring her refreshments and sit beside her.

At last George came back for Rebecca's shawl and flowers. She was going away. She did not even condescend to come back and say good-bye to Amelia. The poor girl let her husband come and go without saying a word, and her head fell on her breast. George went away then with the bouquet ; but when he gave it to the owner, there lay a note, coiled like a snake among the flowers. Rebecca's eye caught it at once. She put out her hand and took the nosegay. He saw by her eyes as they met, that she was aware what she should find there. Rebecca gave George her hand with one of her usual quick knowing glances, and made a curtsy and went off with her husband.

Amelia saw the one part at least of the bouquet-scene. It was quite natural that George should come to fetch Rebecca's shawl and flowers : it was no more than he had done twenty times before ; but now it was too much for her. "William," she said, suddenly clinging to Dobbin, "you've always been very kind to me—I'm—I'm not well. Take me home."

Osborne meanwhile, wild with elation, went off to a play-table, and began to bet frantically. He won repeatedly. "Everything succeeds with me to-night," he said.

But his luck at play even did not cure him of his restlessness, and he started up after a while, pocketing his winnings, and went to a buffet, where he drank off many bumpers of wine.

Here Dobbin found him. Dobbin looked as grave as his comrade was flushed and jovial. "Come out, George," said Dobbin; "don't drink."

"Drink! there's nothing like it. Drink yourself, and light up your lantern jaws, old boy. Here's to you."

Dobbin went up and whispered something to him, at which George, giving a start and a wild hurrah, tossed off his glass, and walked away speedily on his friend's arm. "The enemy has passed the Sambre," William said, "and our left is engaged. Come away. We march in three hours."

Away went George, his nerves quivering with excitement at the news. What were love and intrigue now! He thought about a thousand things but these in his walk to his quarters—his past life—the fate which might be before him—the wife, the child perhaps, from whom unseen he might be about to part. Oh, how he wished that night's work undone! and that with a clear conscience at least he might say farewell to the tender and guileless being by whose love he had set such little store!

He thought over his brief married life. How wild and reckless he had been. How unworthy he was of her! Why had he married her? He was not fit for marriage.

Why had he disobeyed his father, who had always been so generous to him? He sat down and wrote to his father. Dawn faintly streaked the sky as he closed his farewell letter. He sealed it and kissed the superscription, and thought of the thousand kindnesses which the stern old man had done him.

He entered Amelia's room, stepping very softly. She lay quiet, and her eyes were closed. By the pale night-lamp he could see her sweet, pale face. Good God! how pure she was; how gentle, how tender, and how friendless! and he how selfish, brutal, and black with crime. Heart-stained and shame-stricken, he stood and looked at the sleeping girl. How dared he pray for one so spotless! God bless her! God bless her! He came to the bedside, and bent over the pillow noiselessly towards the gentle pale face.

Two fair arms closed tenderly round his neck as he stooped down. "I am awake, George," the poor child said, with a sob fit to break the little heart that nestled so closely to his own. She was awake, poor soul, and to what? At that moment a bugle from the Place of Arms began sounding clearly, and was taken up through the town; and amidst the drums of the infantry and the shrill pipes of the Highlanders, the whole city awoke.

Knowing how useless regrets are, and how the indulgence of sentiment only serves to make people more miserable, Mrs. Rebecca wisely determined to give way to no vain feelings of sorrow, and bore the parting from her

husband with quite a Spartan equanimity. Indeed, Captain Rawdon himself was much more affected by the leaving than the resolute little woman to whom he bade farewell. She had mastered this rude coarse nature ; and he loved and worshipped her with all his faculties of regard and admiration. In all his life he had never been so happy as, during the past few months, his wife had made him. And he cursed his past follies and extravagances, and bemoaned his debts, which must remain forever as obstacles to prevent his wife's advancement in the world.

He went through his little catalogue of effects, striving to see how they might be turned into money for his wife's benefit, in case any accident should befall him. He pleased himself by noting down with a pencil, in his big schoolboy handwriting, the various items of his portable property which might be sold for his widow's advantage. And this famous dandy went off on his campaign with a prayer on his lips for the woman he was leaving. He took her up from the ground, and held her in his arms for a minute, tight pressed against his strong beating heart. His eyes were dim, as he put her down and left her. He rode by his general's side, and smoked his cigar in silence ; and it was not until they were some miles on their way that he left off twirling his moustache and broke silence.

And Rebecca, as we have said, wisely determined not to give way to unavailing sentimentality on her husband's departure. She waved him an adieu from the window,

and stood there for a moment looking out after he was gone. The cathedral towers and the gables of the quaint old houses were just beginning to blush in the sunrise. There had been no rest for her that night ; so she went to bed, and slept very comfortably.

The town was quite quiet when she awoke at ten o'clock, and partook of coffee. The meal over, she surveyed her position, and found that with her own trinkets and trousseau in addition to her husband's effects, she might reckon on six or seven hundred pounds at the very least, to begin the world with.

So she passed the morning, ordering and locking up her properties in the most agreeable manner. Among the notes in Rawdon's pocket-book, was a draft for twenty pounds on Osborne's banker. This made her think of Mrs. Osborne. " I will go and get the draft cashed," she said, " and pay a visit afterwards to poor little Emmy." If this is a novel without a hero, at least let us lay claim to a heroine. No man in the army could be more cool and collected in the presence of doubts and difficulties, than the indomitable little aide-de-camp's wife.

Rebecca's appearance struck Amelia with terror, and made her shrink back. It recalled to her the world and the remembrance of yesterday. In the overpowering fears about tomorrow she had forgotten everything except that her husband was gone and was in danger. How long had the poor girl been on her knees ! what hours of speechless prayer had she passed there !

"Dearest Amelia, you are very unwell," the visitor said, putting forth her hand. "What is it ? I could not rest until I knew how you were."

Amelia drew back her hand, and trembled all over. "Why are *you* here, Rebecca ?" she said, looking at her solemnly with her large eyes. "Tell me, did I ever do you anything but kindness ?"

"Indeed, Amelia, no," the other said, hanging down her head.

"When you were quite poor, who was it that befriended you ? Was I not a sister to you ? Why did you come between my love and me ? Who sent you to separate those whom God joined, and take my darling's heart from me ? Do you think you could love him as I did ? His love was everything to me. You knew it, and wanted to rob me of it. But he came back to me. I knew he would. I knew that no falsehood, no flattery, could keep him from me long. I knew he would come."

The poor girl spoke these words with a spirit and volubility which Rebecca had never before seen in her, and before which the latter was dumb. "But what have I done to you," she continued in a more pitiful tone, "that you should try and take him from me ? From almost the very first day of our wedding, you came and blighted it. Now he is gone, are you come to see how unhappy I am ?"

"Are you come to fetch him from me ?" she continued, in a wilder tone. "He was here, but he is gone now. There on that very sofa he sat, I was on his knee, and my arms

were round his neck, and we said, 'Our Father.' Yes, he was here ; and they came and took him away, but he promised to come back."

"He will come back, my dear," said Rebecca, touched in spite of herself.

"Look," said Amelia, "this is his sash - isn't it a pretty colour?" and she took up the fringe and kissed it. She had forgotten her anger, her jealousy, the very presence of her rival seemingly. For she walked silently and almost with a smile on her face towards the bed, and began to smooth George's pillow.

Rebecca walked, too, silently away. "How is Amelia?" asked Jos. "There should be somebody with her," said Rebecca. "I think she is very unwell:" and she went away with a very grave face.

At half-past two Mr. Joseph came into Amelia's room to see if he could coax her to share his meal. "Try;" said he, "the soup is very good. Do try, Emmy," and he kissed her hand. Except when she was married, he had not done so much for years before. "You are very good and kind, Joseph," she said. "But, if you please, I will stay in my room to-day."

The savour of the soup, however, was agreeable to Mrs. O'Dowd's nostrils, and she thought she could bear Jos company. So the two sat down to their meal. But all of a sudden the Major's wife laid down her knife and fork. The windows of the room were open, and looked southward,

and a dull distant sound came over the sun-lighted roofs from that direction.

“What is it?” said Jos.

“God defend us ; it’s cannon !” Mrs. O’Dowd cried, starting up, and running to the balcony. A thousand pale and anxious faces might have been seen looking from other casements. And presently it seemed as if the whole population of the city rushed into the streets.

All that day until past sunset, the cannon never ceased to roar. It was dark when the cannonading stopped all of a sudden.

All of us have read what occurred during that interval. It is a tale which is in every Briton’s mouth, and you and I are never weary of hearing the history of that great action. All our friends took their share and fought like men in the great field. All day long, while the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless British infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard at Brussels were ploughing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Towards evening, the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened. They were preparing for a final onset. It came at last : the columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill, at length and at once to sweep the British from the height which they had maintained all day, and spite of all : unscared by the thunder of the artillery which hurled death from the British line—the dark rolling

column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence, when it began to wave and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then at last the British troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.

No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city : and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.

CHAPTER IX

LADY JANE

The kind reader must please to remember, while the army is marching from Flanders to Paris, after its heroic actions — that there are a number of people living peaceably in England who must come in for a share of this chronicle. During the time of these battles and dangers, old Miss Crawley was living at Brighton, very moderately moved by the great events that were going on. The great events rendered the newspapers rather interesting, to be sure, and Miss Briggs, the companion, read out the *Gazette*, in which Rawdon Crawley's gallantry was mentioned with honour, and his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel recorded.

“What a pity that young man has taken such an irretrievable step in the world !” his aunt said ; “ he would have had my money some day ; and, instead of that, he is a doomed pauper, with a dancing girl for a wife.”

“ Will my dear Miss Crawley not cast an eye of compassion upon the heroic soldier, whose name is inscribed in the annals of his country’s glory ? ” said Miss Briggs, who loved to speak romantically when there was an occasion. “ Has not the colonel done deeds which make the name of Crawley illustrious ? ”

“ Briggs, you are a fool,” said Miss Crawley : “ Colonel Crawley has dragged the name of Crawley through the mud Marry a drawing-master’s daughter, indeed ! ”

A few weeks after the famous fight of Waterloo, however, Miss Crawley received a box containing presents, and a dutiful letter, from the colonel, her nephew. In the box were a pair of French epaulets, and a Cross of the Legion of Honour—relics from the field of battle ; and Rawdon Crawley did not know what better to do with the spoils than to send them to his kindest old friend. Should he continue to write to her from Paris ?

Miss Crawley caused Briggs to write back to the colonel a gracious and complimentary letter, encouraging him to continue his correspondence. “ Of course I know,” she explained to Briggs, “ that Rawdon could not write such a letter, and that it is that clever little wretch of a Rebecca, who dictates every word to him. But that is no reason why my nephew should not amuse me ; and so I wish to let him know that I am in high good humour.”

Rawdon’s promotion, and the honourable mention of his name in the *Gazette*, had a contrary effect upon the Rector’s wife, Mrs. Bute Crawley, and filled that good

Christian lady with alarm. Would his aunt relent towards him now he was a lieutenant-colonel and a C. B. ? and would that odious Rebecca once more get into favour ? She wrote a sermon for her husband about the vanity of military glory, which the worthy parson read in his best voice and without understanding one syllable of it. He had Pitt Crawley for one of his auditors – Pitt, who had come with his two half-sisters to church, which the old baronet could now by no means be brought to frequent.

Since the departure of Becky Sharp, that old wretch had given himself up entirely to bad courses, to the great scandal of the county, and the mute horror of his son. The polite families fled the Hall and its owner in terror. Sir Pitt went about tippling at his tenants' houses ; and drank rum-and-water with the farmers at Mudbury on market-days. The two daughters of the house of Queen's Crawley would have been allowed to run utterly wild (for Sir Pitt swore that no governess should ever enter his doors again) had not Mr. Crawley, by threatening the old gentleman, forced the latter to send them to school.

Meanwhile, whatever individual differences there might be between them all, Miss Crawley's dear nephews and nieces were unanimous in loving her and sending her tokens of affection. Thus Mrs. Bute sent guinea-fowls, and a pretty purse or pincushion worked by her darling girls ; while Mr. Pitt sent peaches and grapes from the Hall. The Southampton coach used to carry these tokens of affection to Miss Crawley at Brighton : it used some-

times to convey Sir Pitt thither too ; for he had an attraction in Brighton in the person of Lady Jane Sheepshanks, who lived there with her mamma.

Lady Jane was gentle, blushing, silent, and timid. Her mamma ordered her dresses, her books, her bonnets, and her ideas for her. She was ordered to take pony-riding, or piano-exercise, or any other sort of bodily medicament, according as her mother saw meet. Miss Crawley had taken a liking to Lady Jane at first sight, as she always did for pretty and modest young people ; and she became a pretty constant visitor to Miss Crawley, accompanied her in her drives, and solaced many of her evenings. Towards her Miss Crawley's manners were charming. The old lady told her a thousand anecdotes about her youth, talking to her in a very different strain from that in which she had been accustomed to converse to the godless little Rebecca ; for there was in Lady Jane's innocence that which rendered light talking impertinence before her, and Miss Crawley was too much of a gentlewoman to offend such purity.

In the autumn evenings (when Rebecca was flaunting at Paris, and our Amelia, our dear wounded Amelia, ah ! where was she ?) Lady Jane would be sitting in Miss Crawley's drawing-room singing sweetly to her, in the twilight, her little simple songs, while the sun was setting, and the sea was roaring on the beach. Pitt meanwhile in the dining-room, with a pamphlet of the Corn Laws by his side, sipped madeira : built castles in the air : thought himself a fine fellow ; and felt more in love with Lady Jane than he had been any time these seven years.

Where meanwhile was he who had been once first favourite for this race for money? Becky and Rawdon, as we have seen, were passing the winter of 1815 in Paris. There her success was remarkable. All the French ladies voted her charming. She spoke their language admirably. Her husband was stupid, certainly, but he was the heir of the rich Miss Crawley, whose house had been open to the French nobility during the Revolution. One of them wrote to her. " Why does not our dear Miss come to her nephew and niece in Paris? All the world is charmed with the wit and beauty of the charming Mrs. Rawdon. In her we see the grace and fascination of our dear Miss Crawley. She is at all the balls; but does not dance; and yet how pretty this fair creature looks surrounded by the homage of men, and so soon to be a mother! To hear her speak of you, her protectress, would bring tears to the eyes of an ogre. How she loves you! how we all love our admirable Miss Crawley."

It is to be feared that this letter did not by any means advance Mrs. Becky's interest with her admirable relative. On the contrary, the fury of the lady was beyond bounds; and when, in the early spring of 1816, the journal contained the following announcement: On the 26th March—the lady of Lieutenant Colonel Crawley, of the Life Guards Green—of a son and heir'—Miss Crawley's rage rose to its height. Sending instantly for Pitt, her nephew, and Lady Southdown, mother of Lady Jane, she requested an immediate celebration of the marriage. And she announced

that it was her intention to allow the young couple a thousand a year during her lifetime, at the expiration of which her property would be settled upon her nephew and her dear niece, Lady Jane.

When they were married, the old lady fairly owned she could not part with her favourite; Pitt and his wife came, therefore, and lived with Miss Crawley. The old lady clung to her niece more and more every day. Let us hope that Lady Jane supported her kindly, and led her with gentle hand out of the busy struggle of Vanity Fair.

CHAPTER X

WIDOW AND MOTHER

The news which the *Gazette* brought to the Osbornes gave a dreadful shock to the family and its chief. The girls indulged unrestrained in their grief. The gloomy old father was still more borne down by his fate and sorrow. He strove to think that a judgement was on the boy for his disobedience. He dared not own that the severity of the sentence frightened him, and that its fulfilment had come too soon upon his curses. Sometimes a shuddering terror struck him, as if he had been the author of the doom which he had called down upon his son. There was a chance before of reconciliation. But there was no hope now. The boy stood on the other side of the gulf impassable, haunting his parent with sad eyes.

Whatever his sensations might have been, however, the stern old man would have no confidant. He never mentioned his son's name to his daughters: but ordered the elder to place the servants in mourning. All parties and

entertainments, of course, were to be put off. Osborne never entered the drawing-room, but remained constantly in his own study ; and the whole front part of the house was closed.

About three weeks after the battle, Mr. Osborne's acquaintance, Sir William Dobbin, called at the house in Russell Square, with a very pale and agitated face. Ushered into the study, and after a few words, which neither the speaker nor the host understood, he produced a letter sealed with a large red seal. " My son, Major Dobbin," Sir William said, with some hesitation, " dispatched me a letter by another officer, who arrived in town to day. My son's letter contains one for you, Osborne." He placed the letter on the table, and Osborne stared at him for a moment or two in silence. His looks frightened the ambassador, who, after looking guiltily for a little time at the grief-stricken man, hurried away without a further word.

The letter was in George's well-known hand-writing. It was the one he had written just before he took leave of Amelia. Osborne trembled long before the letter from his dead son. The poor boy did not say much. He had been too proud to acknowledge the tenderness which his heart felt. He only said, that on the eve of a great battle, he wished to bid his father farewell, and solemnly to implore his good offices for the wife—it might be for the child—whom he left behind him. He thanked his father for his former generous conduct ; and promised him,

that if he fell on the field or survived it, he would act in a manner worthy of the name of Osborne.

His English pride, awkwardness, perhaps, had prevented him from saying more. His father could not see the kiss George had placed on the superscription of the letter. Mr. Osborne dropped it with the deadliest pang of balked affection. His son was still beloved and unforgiven.

Towards the end of the autumn Osborne announced that he was going abroad. He did not say whither, but his daughters knew at once that his steps would be turned to Belgium. The city of Brussels was a vast military hospital for months after the battle; and as men and officers began to rally from their hurts, the gardens and places of public resort swarmed with maimed officers old and young. Mr. Osborne found out some of the —th easily. He knew their uniform quite well. On the day after his arrival he saw a soldier in the well-known facings reposing on a bench in the park, and went and sat down trembling by the convalescent man.

“Were you in Captain Osborne’s company?” he said, and added, after a pause, “he was my son.”

The man was not of the captain’s company, but he touched his cap respectfully to the broken-spirited gentleman who questioned him. “The whole army didn’t contain a finer officer,” he said. “The sergeant of the company was in town, though. His honour might see him, who could tell him all he wanted to know about—about the

—th's actions. But his honour had seen Major Dobbin, no doubt, the brave captain's great friend : and Mrs. Osborne, who was here too, and had been very bad, he heard everybody say. They say she was out of her mind for six weeks or more. But your honour knows all about that—and asking your pardon—" the man added.

Osborne put a guinea into the soldier's hand, and told him to bring the sergeant to the Hotel. In his company the old gentleman made the journey to Waterloo. He saw the point of the road where the 7th marched into action. Farther on was the position which they took and held during the day, forming time after time to receive the charge of the enemy's horsemen, and lying down under shelter of the bank from the furious French cannonade. And it was at this declivity when at evening the whole English line received the order to advance, that the captain, hurrying and rushing down the hill waving his sword, received a shot and fell dead. "It was Major Dobbin who took back the captain's body to Brussels," the sergeant said, in a low voice, "and had him buried, as your honour knows."

Osborne had already seen the burial-place. Indeed, he had driven there immediately after his arrival at Brussels. George's body lay in the pretty burial-ground near the city ; in which place, having once visited it on a party of pleasure, he had lightly expressed a wish to have his grave made. And there the young officer was laid by his friend, in a quiet corner of the garden.

After the drive to Waterloo, as Mr. Osborne's carriage was nearing the gates of the city at sunset, they met another carriage, in which were two ladies, and by the side of which an officer was riding. Osborne gave a start back as the sergeant saluted the officer. The ladies were Amelia and her faithful friend, Mrs. O'Dowd. His son's widow, Amelia, but how changed from the fresh and comely girl Osborne knew. Her face was white and thin. Her pretty brown hair was parted under a widow's cap. Her eyes were fixed and looking nowhere. They stared blank into the face of Osborne, as the carriages passed, but she did not know him ; nor did he recognize her, until looking up, he saw Dobbin riding by her ; and then he knew who it was. He hated her. He did not know how much until he saw her there.

A minute afterwards, a horse came clattering over the cobbles behind Osborne's carriage, and Dobbin rode up. "Mr. Osborne, Mr. Osborne!" he cried, and held out his hand. Osborne made no motion to take it, but shouted to his servant to drive on.

Dobbin laid his hand on the carriage side. "I will see you, sir," he said. "I have a message for you."

"From that woman," said Osborne, fiercely.

"No," replied the other, "from your son," at which Osborne fell back into the corner of his carriage, and Dobbin rode behind it through the town, until they reached Mr. Osborne's hotel. There he followed Osborne up to his apartments.

"Pray, have you any commands for me, Captain, — or I beg your pardon, I should say, Major Dobbin, since better men than you are dead, and you step into their shoes," said Mr. Osborne, in a sarcastic tone.

"Better men are dead," Dobbin replied, "I want to speak to you about one."

"Make it short, sir," said the other, scowling at his visitor.

"I am here as his closest friend, and the executor of his will," the Major resumed. "Are you aware how small his means are, and of the straitened circumstances of his widow?"

"I don't know his widow, sir," Osborne said. "Let her go back to her father."

"Do you know, sir," went on Dobbin, without heeding the interruption, "that Mrs. Osborne's life and her reason almost have been shaken by the blow which has fallen on her? It is very doubtful whether she will rally. There is a chance left for her, however, and it is about this that I came to speak to you. She will be a mother soon. Will you visit the parent's offence upon the child's head? or will you forgive the child for poor George's sake?"

Osborne broke out into a rhapsody of self-praise and imprecations. No father could have behaved more generously to a son, who had rebelled against him so wickedly. He had died without even so much as confessing he was wrong. Let him take the consequences of his undutiful-

ness and folly. As for himself, Mr. Osborne, he was a man of his word. He had sworn never to speak to that woman, or to recognize her as his son's wife. "And that's what you may tell her," he concluded : "and that's what I will stick to to the last day of my life."

There was no hope from that quarter then. The widow must live on her slender pittance, or on such aid as Jos could give her. "I might tell her, and she would not heed it," thought Dobbin sadly : for the poor girl's thoughts were not here at all since her catastrophe, and, stupefied under the pressure of her sorrow, good and evil were alike indifferent to her. So, indeed, were even friendship and kindness. She received them both uncomplainingly, and having accepted them, relapsed into her grief.

Tread silently round the hapless couch of the poor prostrate soul. Shut gently the door of the dark chamber wherein she suffers, as those kind people did who nursed her through the first months of her pain, and never left her until heaven had sent her consolation. A day came—of almost terrified delight and wonder—when the poor widowed girl pressed a child upon her breast—a child, with the eyes of George who was gone—a little boy, as beautiful as a cherub. How she laughed and wept over it—how love, and hope, and prayer woke again in her bosom as the baby nestled there. She was safe. She was safe. The doctors who attended her, and had feared for her life or her brain, had waited anxiously for this crisis before they could pronounce that either was secure. It was worth the long months of doubt and dread which the persons who had

constantly been with her had passed, to see her eyes once more beaming tenderly upon them.

Our friend Dobbin was one of them. He had brought her back to England, and to her mother's house. To see Dobbin holding the infant, and to hear Amelia's laugh as she watched him, would have done any man good. How she nursed and dressed the child, and lived upon him. The baby was her being. Of nights, and when alone, she had stealthy and intense raptures of motherly love—joys far higher than reason—blind beautiful devotions which only women's hearts know. It was William Dobbin's task to muse upon these movements of Amelia's, and to watch her heart; and if his love made him divine almost all the feelings which agitated it, alas ! he could see with a fatal perspicuity that there was no place there for him. And so, gently, he bore his fate, knowing it, and content to bear it.

One day he came to see her. The child was asleep. "Hush," said Amelia, annoyed perhaps at the creaking of the Major's boots.

"I am come to say good-bye, Amelia," said he, taking her slender little white hand gently.

"Good-bye ? and where are you going ?" she said, with a smile.

"Send the letters to the agents," he said : "they will forward them ; for you will write to me, won't you ? I shall be away a long time."

"I'll write to you about Georgy," she said. "Dear William, how good you have been to him and me! Look at him. Isn't he an angel?"

The little pink hands of the child closed mechanically round the honest soldier's finger, and Amelia looked up in his face with bright maternal pleasure. The cruellest looks could not have wounded him more than that glance of hopeless kindness. He bent over the child and mother. He could not speak for a moment. And it was with all his strength that he could force himself to say a God bless you. "God bless you," said Amelia, and held up her face and kissed him.

"Hush! Don't wake Georgy!" she added, as William Dobbin went to the door with heavy steps. She did not hear the noise of his cab-wheels as he drove away; she was looking at the child, who was laughing in his sleep.

CHAPTER XI

HOW TO LIVE WELL ON NOTHING A YEAR

During a course of some two or three years, Rawdon Crawley and his wife lived very comfortably in Paris. It was at this period that he sold out of the Guards, and went on half-pay; so that, when we find him again, his moustaches and the title of colonel are the only relics of his military profession. But it became increasingly evident to Rebecca that their position was but a precarious one, and that she must push Rawdon's fortune in their own country. She must get him an appointment at home or in the colonies; and she determined to make a move on England as soon as the way could be cleared for her.

As a first step she took a journey to England alone, her object being to effect a compromise with her husband's numerous creditors, and by offering them ninepence or a shilling in the pound, to secure a return for him into his own country. It does not become us to trace the steps which she took in the conduct of this most difficult negotiation : but she brought the colonel's creditors in the end to accept her proposals, and their chief complimented her upon the brilliant way in which she did business, and declared that there was no professional man who could beat her.

Rebecca received their congratulations with perfect modesty ; ordered a bottle of sherry to treat the lawyers : shook hands with them at parting, in excellent good humour, and returned straightway to the continent, to rejoin her husband and son, and acquaint the former with the glad news of his entire liberation.

As regards the latter, Rebecca had not, to say truth, seen much of the young gentleman since his birth. After the fashion of French mothers, she had placed him out to nurse in a village near Paris, where little Rawdon passed the first months of his life, not unhappily, with a numerous family of foster-brothers, in wooden shoes. His father would ride over to see him many a time, and the elder Rawdon's paternal heart glowed to see him rosy and dirty, shouting lustily, and happy in the making of mud-pies, under the superintendence of his nurse.

At this juncture news arrived which was spread among the many creditors of the colonel in Paris, and which caused them great satisfaction. Miss Crawley, the rich aunt from whom he expected his immense inheritance, was dying ; the colonel must haste to her bedside Mrs. Crawley and her child would remain behind until he came to reclaim them. He departed for Calais ; but instead of going to Dover at once, he halted at the French port.

Her aunt was dead. Mrs. Crawley ordered the most intense mourning for herself and little Rawdon. The colonel was busy arranging the affairs of the inheritance. They could take the first floor rooms in their hotel now, and Becky had a consultation with the landlord about the new hangings for their return after the funeral. Everything was adjusted except the bill ; and Rebecca went off in one of the hotel carriages, her child by her side ; the admirable landlord and landlady smiling farewell to her from the gate.

At Calais she rejoined her husband. And so, Colonel and Mrs. Crawley came to London : and it is at their house in Curzon Street, Mayfair, that they really showed the skill which must be possessed by those who live on nothing a year.

Rebecca's wit, cleverness, and flippancy made her speedily the vogue in London among a certain class. You beheld her carriage in the Park, surrounded by dandies of note. Her little box at the Opera was crowded with heads constantly changing. But it must be confessed

that the ladies held aloof from her, and that their doors were shut to our little adventuress.

Rawdon at first felt very acutely the slights which were passed upon his wife, and talked of calling out the husbands of every one of the insolent women who did not pay a proper respect to her ; and it was only by the strongest entreaties that he was brought into keeping a decent behaviour. " You can't shoo me into society," she said, good-naturedly. " Remember my dear, that I was but a governess, and you have the worst reputation for all sorts of wickedness. We shall get as many friends as we want by and by, and in the meanwhile you must be a good boy and do as you are told. When we heard that your aunt had left almost everything to Pitt, do you remember what a rage you were in ? You would have told all Paris, if I had not made you keep your temper, and where would you have been now ? -- in prison for debt, and not established in London with every comfort about you. You were in such a fury you were ready to murder your brother, and what good would have come of remaining angry ? All the rage in the world won't get us your aunt's money ; and it is much better that we should be friends with your brother's family than enemies. When your father dies, Queen's Crawley will be a pleasant house for you and me to pass the winter in." Rawdon was obliged to acknowledge his wife's cleverness, and to trust himself to her guidance for the future.

Indeed, when Miss Crawley quitted the world, and her money was left to Pitt, the conduct of Rawdon Crawley,

who got but a hundred pounds, was such as to astonish his brother and delight Lady Jane. He wrote to his brother a very frank, manly, good-humoured letter from Paris. He was aware, he said, that by his own marriage he had forfeited his aunt's favour ; and though he did not disguise his disappointment that she should have been so entirely relentless towards him, he was glad that the money was still kept in their branch of the family, and heartily congratulated his brother on his good fortune. He sent his affectionate remembrances to his sister, Lady Jane. The letter concluded with a postscript to Pitt in Rebecca's own handwriting. She, too, begged to join in her husband's congratulations. She would ever remember Mr. Crawley's kindness to her in early days, wished him every happiness in his married life, and asked his permission to offer her remembrances to Lady Jane, of whose goodness all the world informed her.

Pitt Crawley received this communication very graciously, and he assured Rawdon of a welcome from him and Lady Jane (who thanked Mrs. Crawley for her good opinion) whenever he should come to England. Thus a reconciliation was brought about between the brothers. "When Lady Jane comes to town from Queen's Crawley," thought Rebecca, "she shall be my sponsor in London society."

About the little Rawdon, if nothing has been said all this while, it is because he is hidden upstairs in a garret somewhere. His mother scarcely ever took notice of him.

He passed his days with his French nurse as long as she remained with the family, and when she went away, the little fellow, howling in the loneliness of the night, had compassion taken on him by a nursemaid, who took him out of his solitary nursery into her bed in a garret hard by, and comforted him.

Rebecca, my Lord Steyne and one or two more were in the drawing-room after the Opera, when this shouting was heard overhead. "It's my cherub crying for his nurse," she said. She did not offer to go and see the child. "Don't agitate your feelings by going to look for him," said Lord Steyne, sardonically. "Bah!" replied the other, with a sort of blush, "he'll cry himself to sleep;" and they fell to talking about the Opera.

Rawdon had stolen off, though, to look after his son and heir; and came back when he found honest Dolly consoling the child. The colonel's dressing-room was in these upper regions. He used to see the boy there in private. They were great friends. The father would bring him sweetmeats from the table, and hide them in a certain box, where the child went to seek them, and laughed with joy on discovering the treasure: laughed, but not too loud: for mamma was below asleep and must not be disturbed. When not on duty with Mrs. Rawdon the father passed hours with his boy: who rode on his chest, who pulled his great moustaches, and spent days with him in indefatigable gambols. The room was a low one, and once, when the child was not five years old, his father, who

was tossing him wildly up in his arms, hit the poor little chap's skull so violently against the ceiling that he almost dropped the child, so terrified was he at the disaster.

Rawdon minor had made up his face for a tremendous howl—the severity of the blow indeed authorized that indulgence : but just as he was going to begin, the father interposed.

“For God’s sake, Rawdy, don’t wake mamma,” he cried. And the child, looking in a very piteous way at his father, bit his lips, clenched his hands, and didn’t cry a bit. Rawdon told the story to everybody. “What a trump that boy of mine is! I half sent his head through the ceiling, and he wouldn’t cry for fear of disturbing his mother.”

Sometimes—once or twice a week—that lady visited the upper regions where he lived. She came in blandly smiling in beautiful new clothes, and nodded twice or thrice patronizingly to the little boy, who looked up from his dinner or the pictures he was painting. She was an unearthly being in his eyes, superior to his father—to all the world : to be worshipped and admired at a distance. To drive with that lady was an awful rite : he sat up in the back seat, and did not dare to speak. Sometimes when she was away he stole into his mother’s room. It was as the abode of a fairy to him—a mystic chamber of splendour and delights. O thou poor lonely little benighted boy ! Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts

of little children ; and here was one who was worshipping a stone.

Now Rawdon Crawley had certain manly tendencies of affection in his heart, and could love a child and a woman still. For Rawdon minor he had a secret tenderness, which he felt somehow ashamed of, and tried to hide from his wife. He used to take him out of mornings to the Park, the boy mounted on a little black Shetland pony. It pleased him to see his old quarters, and his old fellow-guardsmen again ; and the old troopers were glad to recognize their ancient officer and dandle the little colonel.

One Sunday morning as they were taking their walk in the Park, they passed by an old acquaintance of the colonel's, Corporal Clink, who was in conversation with an old gentleman, who held a boy in his arms about the age of little Rawdon. The other youngster had seized hold of the Corporal's Waterloo medal, and was examining it with delight.

" Good morning, your honour," said Clink, in reply to the " How-do, Clink ? " of the colonel, " This young gentleman is about the little colonel's age, sir."

" His father was a Waterloo man, too," said the old gentleman who carried the boy, " Wasn't he, Georgy ? "

" Yes," said Georgy. He and the little chap on the pony were looking at each other with all their might—solemnly scanning each other, as children do.

" He was a captain in the —th regiment," continued the old gentleman pompously. " Captain George Osborne,

sir—perhaps you knew him. He died the death of a hero, sir, fighting against the Corsican tyrant.”

Colonel Crawley blushed quite red. “ I knew him very well, sir ” he said, “ and his wife, his dear little wife, sir—how is she ? ” “ She is my daughter, sir,” said the old gentleman, putting down the boy, and handing the colonel a card, on which was written :—

“ Mr. Sedley, Sole Agent for the Black Diamond and Anti-Cinder Coal Association, Fulham Road West.”

Little Georgy went up and looked at the Shetland pony.

“ Should you like to have a ride ? ” said Rawdon minor, from the saddle.

“ Yes,” said Georgy. The colonel, who had been looking at him with interest, took up the child and put him on the pony behind Rawdon minor.

“ Take hold of him, Georgy,” he said, “ take my little boy round the waist - his name is Rawdon.” And both the children began to laugh.

“ You won’t see a prettier pair, I think, this summer’s day, sir,” said the corporal ; and the colonel, the corporal, and old Mr. Sedley, walked by the side of the children.

CHAPTER XII

BACK TO QUEEN’S CRAWLEY.

The visit of duty which Pitt and Lady Jane paid to Queen’s Crawley was never recalled by them without horror. The rupture between the old baronet and the whole county was complete. His dislike for respectable

society increased with age, and the lodge-gates never opened to a gentleman's carriage-wheels.

As they drove up the avenue Pitt remarked with dismay and wrath great gaps among the trees,—his trees, — which the old man was felling entirely without licence. The park wore an aspect of utter dreariness and ruin. The drives were ill-kept, and the carriage splashed and foundered along the road. The front of the terrace was black and covered with mosses ; the once trim flower-beds rank and weedy. Shutters were up along almost the whole line of the house ; the great hall-door was unbarred after much ringing of the bell ; and at length the heir of Queen's Crawley and his bride were admitted into the halls of their fathers.

Sir Pitt was in the Library. He had opened one of the windows, and was bawling to one of Pitt's servants, who seemed to be about to take the baggage down.

"Don't move these trunks," he cried, pointing with a pipe which he held in his hand. "It's only a morning visit, you fool. How do, Pitt? How do, my dear? Come to see the old man, hey? You've a pretty face, too. Come and give old Pitt a kiss, like a good little girl."

The embrace disconcerted the daughter-in-law somewhat, as the caresses of the old gentleman, unshorn and perfumed with tobacco, might well do. But she submitted with a good grace.

“Pitt has got fat,” said the baronet, after this mark of affection. “Does he read you very long sermons, my dear? I won’t ask you to stop ; you’ll find it too stupid, and so should I along with Pitt. I’m an old man now, and like my own ways. Drive to the Rectory, Pitt, and ask Buty for a dinner. He’ll be charmed to see you ; he’s so much obliged to you for getting the old woman’s money. Ha, ha ! Some of it will do to patch up the Hall when I’m gone.”

Then he shuffled across the room to a cupboard, from which he took a little old case containing jewels of some value. “Take that, my dear,” said he ; “I’m glad you’ve come, daughter-in-law ; I like your face ; and here’s something pretty to go to Court in. It belonged to my mother ; and afterwards to the first Lady Crawley. Pretty pearls—never gave them to the ironmonger’s daughter.”

One morning soon after, an express messenger was sent off to Mr. Pitt by the rector’s lady. The old baronet had had a stroke ; he could not speak, but seemed to recognize people. The heir of Crawley arrived in due course, after this catastrophe, and henceforth may be said to have reigned in Queen’s Crawley. For though the old baronet survived some months, he never recovered the use of his intellect or his speech completely, and the government of the estate devolved upon his elder son. In a strange condition Pitt found it ; and to set it clear was a task into which he threw himself with prodigious assiduity.

On sunshiny days the old gentleman was taken out in a chair on the terrace. Lady Jane always walked by him, and was an evident favourite with him. He used to nod many times to her and smile when she came in, and utter inarticulate moans when she went away.

At last a day came when his nurse's occupation was over. Early one morning as Pitt was at his bailiff's books in the study, a knock came to the door, and the nurse presenting herself, said, "If you please Sir Pitt, Sir Pitt died this morning. I was making his gruel, which he took every morning at six, Sir Pitt, when I thought I heard a moan, and — and — and—" She dropped a curtsy.

All the blinds were pulled down at the Hall and Rectory : the Church bell was tolled, and the chancel hung in black.

"Shall I write to your brother—or will you ?" asked Lady Jane.

"I shall write, of course," Sir Pitt said, "and invite him to the funeral : it will be but becoming."

"And—and—and—Mrs Rawdon," said Lady Jane, timidly.

"Mrs. Rawdon must of course be asked," replied Sir Pitt.

A letter was accordingly dispatched by Sir Pitt Crawley to his brother the colonel, in London. Rawdon was but half-pleased at the receipt of it. "What's the use of going down to that stupid place ?" thought he. "I can't stand

being alone with Pitt after dinner, and horses there and back will cost us twenty pounds."

He carried the letter, as he did all difficulties, to Becky. She took up the black-edged missive, and having read it, she jumped up from the chair, crying "Hurray!" and waving the note round her head.

"He's not left us anything," said Rawdon, wondering at the little figure capering about. "I had my share when I came of age."

"You'll never be of age, you silly old man?" Becky replied. "Run out now and order mourning; order it to be brought home to-morrow, so that we will be able to start on Thursday."

"You don't mean to go?" Rawdon interposed.

"Of course I mean to go. I mean that Lady Jane shall present me at Court next year. I mean that your brother shall give you a seat in Parliament. I mean that Lord Steyne shall have your vote, and his; and that you shall be a Governor, or a Treasurer, or a Consul, or some such thing."

"We shall go by the coach," she continued; "They'll like it better. It seems more humble—"

"Rawdy goes of course?" asked the colonel.

"No such thing; why pay an extra place? Let him stay here in the nursery. Go now, and do as I bid you."

The mourning being ready, Colonel Crawley and his wife took a couple of places in the same old coach by which

Rebecca had travelled in the defunct baronet's company, on her first journey into the world some nine years before. How well she remembered the inn yard, and the Cambridge lad who wrapped her in his coat ! Rawdon took his place outside, and talked to the coachman the whole way about the horses and the inns, and who owned the coach by which he had travelled so many times, when he and Pitt were boys going to school. At Mulbury a carriage and a pair of horses received them, with a coachman in black.

"The governor has cut into the timber," Rawdon said, looking about the avenue, and then was silent—so was Becky. Both of them were rather agitated, and thinking of old times. He about his mother, whom he remembered, and a sister who died, of whom he had been passionately fond ; and how he used to thrash Pitt ; and about little Rawdy at home. And Rebecca thought about her own youth ; and of her entrance into life by yonder gates ; and of Miss Pinkerton, and Jos, and Amelia.

Rawdon turned red, and Becky somewhat pale, as they passed through the old hall, arm in arm. She pinched her husband's arm as they entered the oak parlour, where Sir Pitt and his wife were ready to receive them. Pitt, with rather a heightened colour, went up and shook his brother by the hand ; and saluted Rebecca with a handshake and a very low bow. But Lady Jane took both the hands of her sister-in-law and kissed her affectionately. The embrace brought tears into Becky's eyes. The artless mark of kindness and confidence touched and pleased her ; and

Rawdon, encouraged by this demonstration on his sister's part, twisted up his moustaches, and took leave to salute Lady Jane with a kiss, which caused her ladyship to blush exceedingly.

The young ladies, too, had been summoned from school to attend the funeral ceremonies. Rebecca did not attempt to forget her former position of governess towards them, but recalled it frankly and kindly, and asked them about their studies with great gravity.

"She's hardly changed in eight years," said Miss Rosalind to Miss Violet, as they were preparing for dinner.

"Those red-haired women look wonderfully well," replied the other.

"At least she gives herself no airs, and remembers that she was our governess once," Miss Violet added.

Meantime Lady Jane had conducted Rebecca to the apartments prepared for her, and helped her to take off her little black bonnet and cloak, and asked in what more she could be useful.

"What I should like best," said Rebecca, "would be to go to the nursery; and see the dear little children"; on which the ladies looked very kindly at each other, and went to that apartment hand in hand.

Becky admired little Matilda, who was not quite four years old, as the most charming little love in the world; and the boy, a little fellow of two years—pale, heavy-eyed, and large-headed, she pronounced to be a perfect prodigy in point of size, intelligence, and beauty. And then Lady

Jane and her new-found friend had one of those confidential conversations about the children, which all mothers delight in. In half an hour they were close and intimate friends--and in the course of the evening her ladyship informed Sir Pitt that she thought her new sister-in-law was a kind, frank, unaffected, and affectionate young woman.

Sir Pitt remembered the testimonies of respect and veneration which Rebecca had paid to himself in early days, and was tolerably well-disposed towards her. His satisfaction was not lessened by her behaviour and conversation. She doubled the deference which before had charmed him, calling out his conversational powers in such a manner as quite to surprise Pitt himself, who, always inclined to respect his own talents, admired them the more when Becky pointed them out to him "Poor!" she would cry. "What care we for poverty? I am used to it from childhood; and I am often thankful that Miss Crawley's money has gone to restore the splendour of the noble old family of which I am so proud to be a member. I am sure, Sir Pitt, you will make a much better use of it than Rawdon would."

As the birds were plentiful, and partridge-shooting the duty of an English gentleman, Sir Pitt, the first shock of grief over, went out a little and partook of that diversion. The sight of those fields, now his own, gave him many secret joys. Sometimes he took no gun, but went out with a peaceful bamboo cane; Rawdon, his big brother, and the keepers, blazing away at his side. The colonel was now quite respectful to the head of the house. He

listened with sympathy to his senior's schemes of planting and draining ; gave his advice about the stables ; and rode over to Mudbury about a mare which he thought would suit Lady Jane. He had constant bulletins from London respecting little Rawdon, who sent messages of his own. "I am very well." He wrote. "I hope you are very well. I hope mamma is very well. I ride every day in the Park. I can canter. I met the little boy who rode before. He cried when he cantered. I do not cry." Rawdon read these letters to his brother, and Lady Jane, who was delighted with them. The baronet promised to take charge of the lad at school ; and his kind-hearted wife gave Rebecca a bank-note, begging her to buy a present with it for her little nephew.

One day followed another, and the ladies of the house passed their life in those calm pursuits and amusements which satisfy country ladies. "It isn't difficult to be a country gentleman's wife," Rebecca thought. "I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a year."

During her stay at Queen's Crawley Becky made as many friends as she could. Lady Jane and her husband bade her farewell with the warmest demonstrations of goodwill. They looked forward with pleasure to the time when the family house in London being repaired and beautiful, they would meet there.

"How happy you will be to see your darling little boy again!" Lady Jane said, taking leave of her kinswoman.

“ Oh, so happy ! ” said Rebecca, throwing up her green eyes. She was immensely happy to be free of the place, and yet loath to go. Queen’s Crawley was abominably stupid ; and yet the air there was somehow purer than that which she had been accustomed to breathe. Everybody had been dull, but had been kind in their way.

However, the London lamps flashed joyfully as the stage rolled into Piccadilly, and there was a beautiful fire in Curzon Street ; and little Rawdon was up to welcome his papa and mamma.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley had charge of the renovations of Sir Pitt’s house, with full orders from him to sell, barter, confiscate, or purchase furniture ; and she enjoyed herself not a little in an occupation which gave full scope to her taste and ingenuity. The renovation of the house was decided upon when Sir Pitt came to London in November to see his lawyers, and when he passed a week in Curzon Street under the roof of his affectionate brother and sister.

He had put up at an hotel at first ; but Becky, as soon as she heard of the baronet’s arrival, went off alone to greet him, and returned with Sir Pitt in the carriage by her side. She bustled up to Pitt’s bedroom, leading on the servants, and came in herself laughing, with a coal-scuttle out of her own room. She went downstairs to the kitchen and cooked dishes for him. She gave him a bottle of French wine, led him to the drawing-room and made him snug on the sofa by the fire, and let him talk as she listened with the tenderest kindly interest. He found himself more

and more glad every day to get back from the lawyers, to the blazing fire in Curzon Street—a gladness in which the men of law likewise participated, for Pitt's harangues were of the longest and when he went away he felt quite a pang at parting ; and, before they parted, it was agreed that the families should meet again in the country at Christmas.

A day or two before Christmas, then, Becky, her husband and her son made ready and went to pass the holidays at the seat of their ancestors at Queen's Crawley. Becky would have liked to leave the child behind, and would have done so but for Lady Jane's urgent invitations ; and the symptoms of revolt and discontent which Rawdon manifested at her neglect of her son. " He's the finest boy in England," the father said, in a tone of reproach to her, " and you don't seem to care for him, Becky, as much as you do for your spaniel. He shan't bother you much : at home he will be away from you in the nursery, and he shall go outside on the coach with me."

It was with no small delight that little Rawdon watched the dawn rise, and made his first journey to the place which his father still called home. It was a journey of infinite pleasure to the boy, to whom the incidents of the road afforded endless interest ; his father answering all his questions connected with it ; and telling him who lived in the white house to the right, and to whom the park belonged. It was dark again when he was wakened up to enter his uncle's carriage, and he sat up and looked

out of it wondering as the great iron gates flew open, and at the trunks of the trees as they swept by, until they stopped before the windows of the Hall, which were blazing and comfortable with Christmas welcome. The hall-door was flung open—a big fire was burning in the great old fireplace—and the next instant Rebecca was kissing Lady Jane.

She and Sir Pitt performed the same salute with great gravity ; and little Matilda held out her hand and kissed Rawdy, while Pitt minor, the son and heir, stood rather aloof, and examined him as a little dog does a big dog. Then the great dinner-bell having rung, the family assembled at dinner, at which meal Rawdon Junior was placed beside his aunt Jane ; Sir Pitt being uncommonly attentive to his sister-in-law at his own right hand.

Little Rawdon exhibited a fine appetite, and showed a gentlemanlike behaviour.

“ I like to dine here,” he said to his aunt.

“ Why ? ” said the good Lady Jane.

“ I dine in the kitchen when I am at home,” replied Rawdon Minor. But Becky was so engaged with the baronet, pouring out a flood of delights and raptures, and admiring young Pitt, whom she declared to be the most beautiful, intelligent, noble-looking little creature, and so like his father, that she did not hear the remarks of her own flesh and blood at the other end of the table.

As a guest, and it being the first night of his arrival, Rawdon the Second was allowed to sit up until the hour when, a great gilt book being laid on the table before

Sir Pitt, all the domestics of the family streamed in, and Sir Pitt read prayers. It was the first time the poor little boy had ever witnessed or heard of such a ceremonial.

Everybody agreed that little Rawdon was a fine boy. He took command of the children at once — the little girl and the little boy following him with great reverence at such times as he condescended to sport with them. He resisted being kissed by the Miss Crawleys : but he allowed Lady Jane sometimes to embrace him : and it was by her side that he liked to sit when the signal to retire to the drawing-room being given, the ladies left the gentlemen to their claret.

Rawdon was fond of his sister-in-law for her regard for his son. Lady Jane and Becky did not get on *quite* so well at this visit as on the occasion of the former one, when the colonel's wife was bent on pleasing. Perhaps Sir Pitt was rather too attentive to her

But Rawdon, as became his age and size, was fonder of the society of the men than of the women ; and never wearied of accompanying his sire to the stables, whither the colonel retired to smoke his cigar. One day the gentlemen partook of the amusement of rat-hunting in a barn ; than which sport Rawdon as yet had never seen anything more noble. They stopped up the ends of certain drains in the barn, into the other openings of which ferrets were inserted ; and then stood silently aloof with uplifted stakes in their hands, and an anxious little terrier scarcely breathing from excitement, listening motionless on three legs, to the

faint squeaking of the rats below. Desperately bold at last, the persecuted animals bolted above-ground : the terrier accounted for one, the keeper for another ; Rawdon, from flurry and excitement, missed his rat, but on the other hand he half murdered a ferret.

Rawdon and his son went away from Queen's Crawley with the utmost heaviness of heart. Becky and the ladies parted with some alacrity, however ; and she returned to London to continue those avocations with which she had been occupied before Christmas. Under her care Crawley House was ready for the reception of Sir Pitt and his family, when the baronet came to London to attend his duties in Parliament, and to assume that position in the country for which his vast genius fitted him.

Lady Jane's sweetness and kindness had inspired Rebecca with contempt for her ladyship, and it was impossible for her at times not to show, or to let the other divine, her scorn. Her presence too, rendered Lady Jane uneasy. Her husband talked constantly with Becky. Signs of intelligence seemed to pass between them : and Pitt spoke with her on subjects which he never thought of discussing with Lady Jane.

In the country, when Lady Jane was telling stories to the children, who clustered about her knees (little Rawdon into the bargain, who was very fond of her)—and Becky came into the room, sneering with green scornful eyes, poor Lady Jane grew silent under those baleful glances. She could not go on, although Rebecca, with the smallest

inflection of sarcasm in her voice, besought her to continue that charming story.

So these two ladies did not see much of each other, except on the occasions when Becky, having an object to gain, frequented her. They my-deared each other assiduously, but kept apart generally : whereas Sir Pitt, in the midst of his multiplied avocations, found daily time to see his sister-in-law

In the midst of Becky's intrigues and fine parties and schemes Rawdon felt himself more and more isolated every day. He and Rawdon the younger would many a time walk to Crawley House, where he would sit very silent ; and be glad to be employed on an errand about a horse or a servant ; or to carve the mutton for the dinner of the children.

And poor Lady Jane was aware that Rebecca had captivated her husband : although she and Mrs. Rawdon my-deared each other every day they met.

CHAPTER XIII.

GEORGY A GENTLEMAN

Our worthy fat friend Jos Sedley returned to his duties in India soon after Waterloo. He had a thousand anecdotes about the famous battle ; he knew the position of every regiment, and the loss which each had incurred. And he described what the duke said and did on every conceivable moment of that fateful day, so that it was clear he must have been throughout by the conqueror's side. He made

a prodigious sensation in Calcutta, and was called Waterloo Sedley during the whole of his subsequent stay in Bengal.

His London agents paid one hundred and twenty pounds a year to his parents in Fulham. It was the chief support of the old couple ; for Mr. Sedley's speculations in life subsequent to his bankruptcy did not by any means retrieve the old gentleman's fortune ; and there was only his wife in all the world who fancied when he tottered off to the City of a morning, that he was still doing any business there. On Sundays, for 'business' prevented him on week-days, it was old Sedley's delight to take out his little grandson Georgy to the Park, to see the soldiers. Georgy loved the red-coats, and his grandpapa told him how his father had been a famous soldier.

To wash and dress this young gentleman, and to make for him the most wonderful dresses, occupied many hours of Amelia's day. Others she had to spare, were at the service of her old mother and father. She had taken the pains to learn, and used to play, cribbage with him at night. She sang for him when he was so minded. She wrote out his numerous prospectuses and projects.

Besides her pension of fifty pounds a year, there had been five hundred pounds left in her executor's hands at the time of her husband's death, which sum, as George's guardian, Dobbin put out at eight per cent. in an Indian house of agency. About these expenses Amelia never gave herself the trouble to think, but trusted to Dobbin as an accountant : took his somewhat confused calcula-

tions for granted : and never once suspected that the five hundred pounds was his. Twice or thrice in the year she wrote him letters to Madras, letters all about little Georgy. How he treasured these papers ! Whenever Amelia wrote he answered, and not until then. But he sent over endless remembrances of himself to his godson and to her.

Amidst such humble scenes and associates George's early youth was passed, and the boy grew up sensitive, imperious, woman-bred—domineering the gentle mother whom he loved with passionate affection. He ruled all the rest of the world round about him. As he grew, the elders were amazed at his haughty manner and his constant likeness to his father.

Sometimes the Misses Dobbin, the Major's sisters, would call in the family carriage to take Amelia and the little boy a drive if they were so inclined. The patronage and kindness of these ladies was very uncomfortable to Amelia, but she bore it meekly enough, for her nature was to yield ; and, besides, the carriage and its splendours gave little Georgy immense pleasure. The ladies begged occasionally that the child might pass a day with them, and he was always glad to go to that fine garden-house at Denmark Hill, where they lived, and where there were such fine grapes in the hot-houses and peaches on the walls.

One day, after great entreaties, Amelia allowed little George to go and pass a day there—a part of which day she spent in writing to the Major in India. She thanked him for a thousand kind offices and proofs of steadfast

friendship to her in her affliction. She told him the last news about little Georgy, and how he was gone to spend that very day with his sisters.

That night, when Georgy came back, he had round his neck a fine gold chain and watch. He said an old lady, not pretty, had given it him, who cried and kissed him a great deal. But he didn't like her. He liked grapes very much. And he only liked his mamma. Amelia shrunk and started : the timid soul felt a presentiment of terror when she heard that the relations of the child's father had seen him.

Miss Osborne came back to give her father his dinner. He had made a good speculation in the City, and was rather in a good humour that day, and chanced to remark the agitation under which she laboured. "What's the matter, Miss Osborne?" he deigned to say.

The woman burst into tears. "Oh, sir," she said, "I've seen little George. He's as beautiful as an angel—and so like him!" The old man opposite her did not say a word, but flushed up, and began to tremble in every limb.

Georgy repeated his visit to Denmark Hill more than once. Amelia agreed to his going with a heavy heart, was always uneasy during the child's absence from her, and welcomed him back as if he was rescued out of some danger. He brought back money and toys, at which the widow looked with alarm and jealousy. She asked him always if he had seen any gentleman—"Only old Sir

William Dobbin, who drove him about in the chaise, and promised to show him the Tower of London." At last, he said, "There was an old gentleman, with thick eyebrows and a broad hat, with large chain and seals. He looked at me very much. He shook very much. My aunt began to cry. She is always crying." Such was George's report on that night.

Then Amelia knew that the boy had seen his grandfather : and awaited with fear the proposal which she was sure would follow, and which came, in fact, a few days afterwards. Mr. Osborne formally offered to take the boy, and make him heir to the fortune which he had intended that his father should inherit. He would make Mrs. Osborne an allowance, such as to assure her a decent competency. But it must be understood that the child would live entirely with his grandfather in Russell Square ; and that he would be occasionally permitted to see Mrs. George Osborne at her own residence. The message was brought to her in a letter one day, when her mother was from home, and her father absent, as usual, in the City.

She was never seen angry but twice or thrice in her life, and it was in one of these moods that Mr. Osborne's attorney had the fortune to behold her. She rose up trembling and flushing very much as soon as, after reading the letter, he handed it to her, and she tore the paper into a hundred fragments, which she trod on. "I take money to part from my child ! Who dares insult me by proposing such a thing ? Tell Mr. Osborne it is a cowardly letter,

sir— a cowardly letter— I will not answer it. I wish you good morning, sir'' and she bowed me out of the room like a tragedy queen,' said the lawyer who told the story.

But the bills of the little household, which had been settled weekly, fell into arrears. The remittances had not arrived from India, Mr. Sedley told his wife with a disturbed face. Emmy's contribution, paid over cheerfully without any questions, kept the little company on half rations however. But it fell deeper and deeper into trouble ; no remittance came during the next six months ; the butcher was surly, the grocer insolent : once or twice Georgy grumbled about the dinners.

At the beginning of the struggle, Amelia had written off a letter of tender supplication to her brother at Calcutta, imploring him not to withdraw the support which he had granted to their parents, and painting in terms of artless pathos their lonely and hapless condition. She did not know the truth of the matter. The payment of Jos's annuity was still regular : but it was a money-lender in the City who was receiving it old Sedley had sold it for a sum of money wherewith to prosecute his bootless schemes.

One day, when things had come to a very bad pass— when the creditors were pressing, the father in more than usual gloom, the inmates of the house avoiding each other—the father and daughter happened to be left alone together ; and Amelia thought to comfort her father, by telling him what she had done. She had written to Joseph—an answer must come soon. He was always generous,

though careless. He could not refuse, when he knew how straitened the circumstances of his parents.

Then the poor old gentleman revealed the whole truth to her—that his son was still paying the annuity, which his own imprudence had flung away. He thought Amelia's terrified look conveyed reproaches to him for his concealment.

“Ah!” said he, with quivering lips, “you despise your old father now.”

“Oh, papa! it is not that,” Amelia cried out, falling on his neck, and kissing him many times. “You are always good and kind. You did it for the best. It is not for the money—it is O my God! have mercy upon me, and give me strength to bear this trial;” and she kissed him again wildly, and went away.

Still the father did not know what that explanation meant and the burst of anguish with which the poor girl left him. It was that she was conquered. The sentence was passed. The child must go from her—to others to forget her. Her heart and her treasure, her joy, hope, love, worship—her God, almost! She must give him up; and then—and then she would go to George; and they would watch over the child, and wait for him until he came to them in heaven.

She put on her bonnet, scarcely knowing what she did, and went out to walk in the lanes by which George used to come back from school, and where she was in the habit of

going to meet him. It was May. The leaves were all coming out, the weather was brilliant: the boy came running to her, flushed with health, singing, his bundle of school-books hanging by a thong. There he was. Both her arms were round him. No, it was impossible. They could not be going to part. "What is the matter, mother?" said he; "you look very pale." "Nothing my child," she said, and stooped down and kissed him.

That night, when the boy said his prayers at her knee, her tender heart suddenly overflowed, and taking him to her breast, she rocked him in her arms, and wept silently over him in a sainted agony of tears.

Her mind being made up, the widow began to take such measures as seemed right to her for advancing the end which she proposed. One day Miss Osborne, in Russell Square, received a letter from Amelia, which made her blush very much and look towards her father, sitting glooming in his place at the other end of the table.

In simple terms, Amelia told her the reasons which had induced her to change her mind respecting the boy. Her father had met with fresh misfortunes which had entirely ruined him. Her own pittance was so small that it would barely enable her to support her parents, and would not suffice to give George the advantages which were his due. Great as her sufferings would be at parting with him, she would, by God's help, endure them for the boy's sake. She knew that those to whom he was going, would do all in their power to make him happy. In a postscript she

stipulated that she should have a written agreement, that she should see the child as often as she wished,—she could not part with him under any other terms. “What? Mrs. Pride has come down, has she?” old Osborne said, when, with a tremulous eager voice Miss Osborne read him the letter. “Ha, ha! I knew she would.” He tried to keep his dignity, and to read his paper as usual,—but he could not follow it.

At last he flung it down: and went out of the room into his study adjoining, whence he presently returned with a key. He gave it to Miss Osborne.

“Get the room over mine—his room that was—ready,” he said. “Yes, sir,” his daughter replied. It was George’s room. It had not been opened for more than ten years. Some of his clothes, papers, and sporting gear, were still there. An Army List for 1814; a little dictionary he was wont to use in writing; and the Bible his mother had given him were on the table; with a pair of spurs, and a dried inkstand covered with the dust of ten years. Ah, since that ink was wet, what days and people had passed away!

Miss Osborne was much affected when she entered the room, and sank quite pale on the bed. “This is blessed news,” the housekeeper said, “and the good old times are returning, mam. The dear little fellow, to be sure, how happy he will be!” and she opened the window, and let air into the chamber.

A few days are passed : and the great event of Amelia's life is consummated. No angel has intervened. The child is sacrificed and offered up to fate ; and the widow is quite alone.

The boy comes to see her often, to be sure. He rides on a pony, to the delight of his old grandfather, Sedley, who walks proudly down the lane by his side. She sees him, but he is not her boy any more. In two days he has adopted a slight imperious air, and patronizing manner. He was born to command, his mother thinks, as his father was before him.

It is fine weather now. Of evenings on the days when he does not come, she walks as far as Russell Square, and rests on the railing of the garden opposite Mr. Osborne's house. She can look up and see the drawing-room windows illuminated, and about nine o'clock the room in the upper story where Georgy sleeps. She prays there as the light goes out, prays with a humble heart, and walks home shrinking and silent. She is very tired when she comes home. Perhaps she may sleep the better for that long weary walk ; and she may dream about Georgy.

One Sunday she happened to be walking in Russell Square, at some distance from Mr. Osborne's house, when George and his aunt came out to go to church ; a little boy asked for charity, and the footman, who carried the books, tried to drive him away ; but Georgy stopped and gave him money. May God's blessing be on the boy ! Emmy ran round the square, and coming up to the beggar, gave

him her mite too. She followed them into church. There she sat in a place whence she could see the head of her boy. Many fresh children's voices rose up there and sang hymns to the Father Beneficent ; and little George's soul thrilled with delight at the burst of glorious psalmody. His mother could not see him for awhile, through the mist that dimmed her eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

BECKY'S RISE AND FALL

At last Becky's kindness and attention to the chief of her husband's family were destined to meet with an exceeding great reward. One happy day she was presented at Court ; her sister-in law acting as her godmother. Sir Pitt and his lady, in their great family carriage, drove up to the house in Curzon Street, to the delight of little Rawdon, who stood with his face against the parlour window panes, smiling and nodding with all his might to his aunt in the carriage. Sir Pitt, in a glittering uniform, descended ; and presently issued forth leading a lady in grand feathers, and holding up a train of magnificent brocade.

Rawdon followed, in his old Guard's uniform, which had grown wofully shabby, and was much too tight ; and the four went off fraternally together. Becky felt she could bless the passers-by, so elated was she in spirit, and so strong a sense had she of the dignified position which she had at last attained in

life. Her dress was pronounced to be charming ; and Lady Jane owned sorrowfully to herself that she was quite inferior in taste to Mrs. Becky. She quickly spied out the magnificence of the brocade, and the splendour of the lace on her dress.

The brocade was an old remnant, Becky said ; and as for the lace, it was a great bargain. She had had it for years.

"My dear Mrs. Crawley, it must have cost a little fortune," Lady Jane said, looking down at her own lace, which was not nearly so good ; and she felt inclined to say that she could not afford such fine clothing, but checked that speech, with an effort, as one uncharitable to her kinswoman.

And yet, if Lady Jane had known all, I think even her kindly temper would have failed her. The fact is, when she was putting Sir Pitt's house in order, Mrs. Rawdon had found the lace and the brocade in old wardrobes, the property of former ladies of the house, and had quietly carried the goods home, and had suited them to her own little person.

And the diamonds—"Where did you get the diamonds, Becky ?" said her husband, admiring some jewels which he had never seen before, and which sparkled on her neck with brilliance and profusion.

Becky blushed a little. Pitt Crawley blushed a little too, and looked out of the window. The fact is, he had given her a portion of the brilliants ; and had omitted to mention the circumstance to his lady.

"Guess!" said Becky. "Why, you silly man, where do you suppose I got them? I hired them to be sure. You don't suppose that all the diamonds which go to Court belong to the owners."

The rest of the diamonds which had created Rawdon's admiration, never went back to any shop, however; but although he knew nothing about them, Lord Steyne, who was in his place at Court, and one of the great dignitaries of the throne of England, and who came up with all his stars, garters, and collars, and paid particular attention to the little woman, knew whence the jewels came, and who paid for them.

A few nights later there came a card of invitation from Lord and Lady Steyne to a dinner the following week; after which appearance at such a select and private party, the claims of Mrs. Becky as regards fashion, were settled, and some of the tallest doors in the metropolis were speedily opened to her.

She gave parties in the little house in Curzon Street. Many scores of carriages, with blazing lamps, blocked the street. Scores of the great dandies of London squeezed and trod on each other on the little stairs, laughing to find themselves there; and many spotless and severe ladies of fashion were seated in the little drawing-room.

How the Crawleys got the money which was spent upon the entertainments with which they treated the polite world, was a mystery which gave rise to some conversation at the time, and probably added zest to these

little festivities. Some persons averred that Sir Pitt gave his brother a handsome allowance : if he did, Becky's power over the baronet must have been extraordinary, indeed, and his character greatly changed in his advanced age. Others hinted that it was Becky's habit to levy contributions on all her husband's friends ; going to them in tears, and declaring that the whole family must go to gaol or commit suicide unless such and such a bill could be paid. People declared that she got money from simply-disposed persons, under pretence of getting them confidential appointments under Government. Who knows what stories were told about our dear friend !

The truth is that by economy and good management—by a sparing use of ready money, and by paying scarcely anybody,—people can manage, for a time at least, to make a great show with very little means. Queen's Crawley supplied her with fruit and game in abundance. Lord Steyne's cellars were at her disposal, and that nobleman's famous cooks presided over her little kitchen, or sent the rarest delicacies from their own. I protest it is quite shameful in the world to abuse a simple creature, as people of her time abused Becky. If every person is to be banished from society who runs into debt and cannot pay,—why, what a howling wilderness and intolerable dwelling Vanity Fair would be !

At this time the amusement of acting charades was in considerable vogue ; and My Lord Steyne was incited by Becky to give an entertainment, which should include

some of these little dramas. We must take leave to introduce the reader to this brilliant function, and with a melancholy welcome, too, for it will be among the very last of the fashionable entertainments to which it will be our fortune to conduct him.

The word was *nightingale*, and after the third syllable was concluded, trills of melody were heard behind the scenes. Some one cried "Philomel, Philomel," and Mrs. Rawdon Crawley came on the stage, the most ravishing little figure in the world. She laughed, hummed, and frisked about the stage, with all the innocence of youth, and curtsied to the audience.

Her mamma enters. "Why, child, you are always laughing and singing," and away she goes with—

THE ROSE UPON MY BALCONY.

The rose upon my balcony, the morning air perfuming,
Was leafless all the winter-time and pining for the
spring ;

You ask me why her breath is sweet and why her cheek
is blooming,

It is because the sun is out and birds begin to sing.

The nightingale, whose melody is through the greenwood
ringing,

Was silent when the boughs were bare and winds were
blowing keen ;

And if, mamma, you ask of me the reason of his singing ;
It is because the sun is out and all the leaves are green.

Thus each performs his part, mamma, the birds have
found their voices,
The blowing rose a flush, mamma, her bonny cheek to
dye ;
And there's sunshine in my heart, mamma, which wakens
and rejoices,
And so I sing and blush, mamma, and that's the reason
why.

At its conclusion the whole house was unanimous for an encore ; and applause and bouquets were showered upon the *nightingale*. A ball followed, and everybody pressed round Becky as the great point of attraction of the evening. A royal personage declared that she was perfection, and engaged her again and again in conversation. Little Becky's soul swelled with pride and delight at these honours ; she saw fortune, fame, fashion before her. The greatest triumph of all was at supper time. She was placed at the grand exclusive table, with his royal highness the exalted personage before mentioned, and the rest of the great guests.

Rawdon Crawley was scared at these triumphs. They seemed to separate his wife farther than ever from him somehow. When the hour of departure came, a crowd of men followed her to her carriage. When it drove up to the covered way, he settled his wife in it, and proposed to walk home.

Two persons separated from the crowd round the gate, and followed the colonel. They were bailiff's officers, and Rawdon was arrested for debt.

By the influence of Lord Steyne Rawdon minor had been admitted to the famous school of Charterhouse, and although the boy was his father's chief solace and companion, and endeared to him by a thousand small ties, yet Rawdon agreed at once to part with him, and to give up his own greatest comfort for the sake of the welfare of the little lad.

When the child was gone, he felt more sad and downcast than he cared to own. He missed him sadly of mornings, and tried in vain to walk in the Park without him. He liked the people who were fond of him, and would go and sit for long hours with his good-natured sister, Lady Jane, and talk to her about the good qualities of the boy.

The colonel went often to see his son, and he was allowed to come home sometimes on Saturdays to his father, who always made a jubilee of that day. When free, Rawdon would take him to the play ; and on Sundays he went to church with Lady Jane and his cousins.

When Rawdon Crawley found himself in the bailiff's house, he had no misgivings, and he was chiefly grateful that it wasn't little Rawdon's week-end for coming home. He sat down next morning and wrote to his wife :—

Dear Becky,—I hope you slept well. Don't be frightened if I don't bring you in your coffee. Last night as I was coming home, I was arrested. It is Nathan's business—a hundred and seventy pounds. You will find seventy in my desk and, as soon as you get this, drive to Nathan, and offer him seventy-five down, and ask him to renew...

If he won't stand it, take my watch and such of your things as you can spare, and raise the money on these—we must, of course, have the sum tonight. It won't do to let it stand over, as tomorrow's Sunday. I'm glad it isn't Rawdon's Saturday for coming home. God bless you.

Yours in haste, R. C.

P. S.—Make haste and come.

This letter was despatched by messenger, and Rawdon went out into the courtyard, and smoked his cigar with a tolerably easy mind. Three hours, he calculated, would be the utmost time required, before Becky should arrive, and open his prison doors. But the day passed and no messenger returned,—no Becky.

At half-past five, a letter arrived, and Rawdon opened it rather tremulously. It was a beautiful letter, highly scented, on a pink paper, and with a light green seal.

My poor dear (Mrs. Crawley wrote), I could not sleep one wink for thinking of what had become of my odious old monster : and only got to rest in the morning, after taking a sleeping draught. So your messenger had to wait in the hall several hours. You may fancy my state when I read your poor dear letter.

Ill as I was, I instantly called for the carriage, and drove to Nathan's. I saw him—I wept—I cried—I fell at his odious knees. Nothing would mollify the horrid man. He would have all the money, he said, or keep my poor monster in prison. I drove home with the intention of paying that sad visit to the pawn-broker (when every

trinket I have should be at your disposal, though they would not fetch a hundred pounds), and found My Lord Steyne here with some others, complimenting me upon last night's performances. Everybody was full of praises and pretty speeches—plaguing poor me, who longed to be rid of them, and was thinking every moment of the time of my poor prisoner.

When they were gone, I went down on my knees to My Lord; told him we were going to pawn everything, and prayed him to give me two hundred pounds. He told me not to be such a fool as to pawn—and promised to send the money to me in the morning : when I will bring it to my poor old monster with a kiss from his affectionate

Becky.

I am writing in bed. Oh, I have such a headache and such a heartache.

When Rawdon read this letter, he turned so red and looked so savage, that everybody perceived that bad news had reached him. All his suspicions, which he had been trying to banish, returned to him. She would not even go out and sell her trinkets to free him. She could laugh and talk about compliments paid to her, whilst he was in prison.

He hurriedly ran to his room, and wrote two hurried lines, which he directed to Sir Pitt or Lady Crawley, and bade the messenger carry them in a cab. He besought his dear brother and sister, for the sake of God ; for the sake of his dear child and his honour ; to come and relieve him from his difficulty.

He then went back to the dining-room, and called for wine. He laughed and talked with a strange boisterousness, as the people thought. Sometimes he laughed madly at his own fears, and went on drinking; listening all the while for the carriage which was to bring his fate back.

At last wheels were heard. The door was opened, and a lady entered, and stood, very nervous.

"It is I, Rawdon," she said, in a timid voice, which she strove to render cheerful. "It is Jane." Rawdon was quite overcome by that kind voice and presence. He ran up to her—caught her in his arms—gasped out some inarticulate words of thanks, and fairly sobbed on her shoulder.

The bills were quickly settled; and Jane, with beaming smiles and happiness in her eyes carried Rawdon away from the bailiff's house; and they went homewards in the cab in which she had hastened to his release. "Pitt was gone to a Parliamentary dinner," she said, "when the note came, and so, dear Rawdon, I—I came myself;" and she put her kind hand in his.

Rawdon left her at Crawley House, and walked home rapidly. It was nine o'clock at night. He ran across the streets, and at length came up breathless opposite his own house. He started back and fell against the railings, trembling as he looked up. The drawing-room windows were blazing with light. She had said she was in bed and ill.

He took out his door-key and let himself into the house. He could hear laughter in the upper rooms. He went

silently up the stairs. Nobody was stirring in the house besides—all the servants had been sent away. Rawdon heard laughter within—laughter and singing. Becky was singing a snatch of the song of the night before ; a hoarse voice shouted “ Brava ! Brava ! ”—it was Lord Steyne’s. Rawdon opened the door and went in. A little table with a dinner was laid out—and wine and plate. Steyne was hanging over the sofa on which Becky sat. The wretched woman was in a brilliant full toilette, her arms and all her fingers sparkling with bracelets and rings ; and the brilliants on her breast which Steyne had given her. He was bowing over her hand to kiss it, when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon’s white face. At the next instant she tried a smile, a horrid smile, as if to welcome her husband : and Steyne rose up, pale, and with fury in his looks.

There was that in Rawdon’s face which caused Becky to fling herself before him. “ I am innocent, Rawdon,” she said ; “ before God, I am innocent.” She clung to his hands. “ Say I am innocent,” she said to Lord Steyne.

He thought a trap had been laid for him, and was as furious with the wife as with the husband. “ You innocent ! ” he screamed out. “ Why, every trinket you have on your body is paid for by me. I have given you thousands of pounds which this fellow has spent, and for which he has sold you. You’re as innocent as your mother, the ballet-dancer, and as your husband the bully. Make way, sir, and let me pass ; ” and Lord Steyne seized his hat,

and, with flame in his eyes, and looking his enemy fiercely in the face, marched upon him, never for a moment doubting that the other would give way.

But Rawdon Crawley springing out, seized him by the neckcloth until Steyne writhed under his arm. "You lie, you coward and villain!" he said; and he struck the peer twice over the face, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could interpose. She stood there trembling before her husband.

"Come here," he said.—She came up at once.

"Take off these things" She began, trembling, pulling the jewels from her arms, and the rings from her shaking fingers, and held them all in a heap, quivering and looking up at him. "Throw them down," he said, and she dropped them. He tore the diamond ornament out of her breast, and flung it at Lord Steyne. It cut him on his bald forehead. He wore the scar to his dying day.

"Come upstairs," Rawdon said to his wife. "Don't kill me, Rawdon," she said. He laughed savagely.—"I want to see if that man lies about the money as he has about me. Has he given you any?"

"No," said Rebecca, "that is—"

"Give me your keys," Rawdon answered, and they went out together.

Rebecca gave him all the keys but one; and she was in hopes that he would not have remarked the absence of that. It belonged to the little desk which Amelia had given her in early days, and which she kept in a secret place. But

Rawdon flung open boxes and wardrobes, throwing their contents here and there, and at last he found the desk. The woman was forced to open it. It contained papers, love-letters, all sorts of small trinkets. And it contained a pocket-book with bank-notes. Some of these were dated ten years back, too, and one was quite a fresh one—a note for a thousand pounds which Lord Steyne had given her.

“Did he give you this?” Rawdon asked.

“Yes,” Rebecca answered.

“I’ll send it to him to-day,” Rawdon said, “and I will pay some of the debts. You will let me know where I shall send the rest to you. You might have spared me a hundred pounds out of all this, Becky—I have always shared with you.”

“I am innocent,” said Becky. And he left her without another word.

The mansion of Sir Pitt Crawley was just beginning to dress itself for the day, as Rawdon, still in his evening costume, entered his brother’s study. Lady Jane was upstairs in the nursery, listening to the morning prayers of her children. Rawdon sat down in the study before the baronet’s desk, and tried to read the *Observer* newspaper, which lay there, until his brother should arrive. But the print fell blank upon his eyes; and he did not know in the least what he was reading.

Punctually at nine, Sir Pitt made his appearance, fresh, neat, smugly shaved,—a model of neatness and propriety. He started when he saw poor Rawdon in his study in tumbled clothes, and with bloodshot eyes.

"Good gracious, Rawdon," he said, "what brings you here at this hour of the morning? Why aren't you at home?"

"Home," said Rawdon, with a wild laugh! "Don't be frightened, Pitt; I'm not drunk. Shut the door; I want to speak to you."

The colonel told his senior briefly, and in broken accents, the circumstances of the case. "And," he concluded, "as the boy has no mother, I must leave him to you and that dear good wife of yours, Pitt. It will comfort me if you will promise to be his friend."

"I will, upon my honour," the baronet said. And thus, and almost mutely, the bargain was struck between them.

As the two brothers passed out of the study, Lady Jane appeared. She held out her hand to Rawdon, and said she was glad he was come to breakfast; though she could perceive, by his haggard face, and the dark looks of her husband, that there was little question of breakfast between them. Rawdon muttered some excuses about an engagement, squeezing hard the timid little hand which his sister-in-law reached out to him. Her imploring eyes could read nothing but calamity in his face; but he went away without another word.

Becky did not rally from the state of stupor and confusion in which the events of the previous night had plunged her intrepid spirit until the church bells were ringing for afternoon service. Then she dressed herself,

and went swiftly down the streets, and never stopped until she came to Sir Pitt Crawley's house. Lady Jane was at church. Becky was not sorry. She slipped past the footman, and was in the baronet's room before he could lay down the paper.

He turned red and started back from her with a look of great alarm and horror.

"Do not look so," she cried. "I am not guilty, Pitt, dear Pitt. I seem so. Everything is against me. And oh ! just when all my hopes were about to be realized : just when happiness was in store for us."

"Is this true, then, that I read in the paper ?" Sir Pitt said.

"It is true," Becky said. "It was only on Friday morning that the news of the death of the Governor of Coventry Island reached England, and Lord Steyne instantly secured the appointment for my dear husband. It was intended as a surprise for him,—he was to see it in the papers to-day. But after the horrid arrest he came home—his suspicions were aroused ; and a dreadful scene took place. And oh, my God, what will happen next ! Pity me, Pitt, and reconcile us !" And as she spoke, she flung herself down on her knees, and bursting into tears, seized hold of Pitt's hand, which she kissed passionately.

It was in this very attitude that Lady Jane, returning from church, found her husband and her sister-in-law.

"I am surprised that woman has the audacity to enter this house," she said, trembling in every limb. "How dare Mrs. Crawley enter the house of—an honest family ?"

Sir Pitt started back, amazed at his wife's display of vigour. Becky still kept her kneeling posture, and clung to Sir Pitt's hand.

"Tell her I am innocent, dear Pitt," she cried.

"Upon my word, my love, I think you do Mrs. Crawley injustice," Sir Pitt said. "Indeed I believe her to be—"

"To be what?" cried out Lady Jane, her clear voice thrilling. "To be a wicked woman—a heartless mother—a false wife. She never loved her little boy, who used to fly here and tell me of her cruelty to him. She never came into a family but she strove to bring misery with her. Her soul is black with worldliness, and all sorts of crimes, I have been a true and faithful wife to you, Sir Pitt; and I declare I will not have that woman under my roof; if she enters it, I and my children will leave it. You must choose, sir, between her and me;" and the lady swept out of the room, fluttering at her own audacity.

As for Becky, she was not hurt; and before she left him the baronet had promised to go and seek out his brother, and endeavour to bring about a reconciliation.

Rawdon Crawley resisted for some time the idea of taking the place which had been procured for him by so odious a patron; and was also for removing the boy from the school where Lord Steyne's interest had placed him. He was induced, however, to acquiesce in these benefits by the entreaties of his brother; but mainly by the thought of the fury Steyne would be in, to think that his enemy's fortune was made through his means.

Pitt tried with all his eloquence to effect a reconciliation between Rawdon and his wife. But Rawdon would not hear of it. "She has kept money concealed from me these ten years," he said. "She swore that she had none from Steyne. She knew it was all up, directly I found it. If she's not guilty, she's as bad as guilty; and I'll never see her again,—never."

His head sank down on his breast as he spoke the words; and he looked quite broken and sad.

When he went to his governorship he wrote to his little boy every mail. He sent over from Coventry Island quantities of pickles, guava jelly, and colonial produce to Lady Jane. To Pitt he sent the newspapers of the island. Little Rawdon used to like to get the papers and read about His Excellency.

Rawdon made his wife a tolerable annuity; and we may be sure that she was a woman who would make a little go a long way. She never made any movement to see her child. He went home to his aunt for Sundays and holidays; and soon knew every bird's-nest about Queen's Crawley.

CHAPTER XV.

AMELIA IN COMFORT.

In Russell Square everybody was afraid of Mr. Osborne, and Mr. Osborne was afraid of Georgy. The boy's dashing manners, and offhand rattle about books and learning, his likeness to his father (dead unreconciled in Brussels

yonder), awed the old gentleman, and gave the young boy the mastery. The old man would start at some hereditary feature or tone unconsciously used by the little lad, and fancy that George's father was again before him. He tried by indulgence to the grandson to make up for harshness to the elder George. People were surprised at his gentleness to the boy. He growled and swore at his daughter as usual : and would smile when George came down late for breakfast.

A few months after Georgy was with his paternal grandfather, Mrs. Sedley died. The illness of the old lady had been the occupation and safeguard of Amelia. From her chair Amelia's mother had taken to her bed, which she had never left ; and from which Mrs. Osborne herself was never absent except when she ran to see George. The old lady grudged her even these rare visits ; she, who had been a kind, smiling, good-natured mother once, in the days of her prosperity, but whom poverty and infirmities had broken down. Amelia bore her harshness quite gently ; smoothed the uneasy pillow ; was always ready with a soft answer to the querulous voice ; soothed the sufferer with words of hope, such as her pious simple heart could best feel and utter, and closed the eyes that had once looked so tenderly upon her.

Then all her time and tenderness were devoted to the consolation and comfort of the bereaved old father, who was stunned by the blow which had befallen him. His wife, his fortune, everything he loved best in the world had

fallen away from him. There was only Amelia to stand by and support with her gentle arms the tottering, heart-broken, old man.

One day a carriage drove up to George's school. The boy in livery announced "Two gentlemen to see Master Osborne." George went into the reception-room, and saw two strangers, whom he looked at in his usual haughty manner, with his head up. One was fat, with moustaches, and the other was lean and long, in a blue frockcoat, with a brown face, and a grizzled head.

"My God, how like he is!" said the long gentleman, with a start. "Can you guess who we are, George?"

The boy's face flushed up, as it usually did when he was moved, and his eyes brightened. "I don't know the other," he said, "but I should think you must be Major Dobbin."

Indeed it was our old friend. His voice trembled with pleasure as he greeted the boy, and taking both the other's hands in his own, drew the lad to him.

"Your mother has talked to you about me—has she?" he said. "That she has," Georgy answered, "hundreds and hundreds of times."

We shut the door upon the meeting between Jos and his bereaved old father and gentle little sister. The old man was very affected: so, of course, was his daughter: nor was Jos without feelings. In that long absence of ten years, the most selfish will think about home and early ties. Jos was unaffectedly glad to shake the hand of his

father, glad to see his little sister, whom he remembered so pretty and smiling, and pained at the alteration which time, grief, and misfortune had made in the shattered old man. He declared that they should never suffer want or discomfort any more, that he was home for some time at any rate, during which his house and everything he had should be theirs ; and that Amelia would look very pretty at the head of his table.

A short time later, Jos's carriage went to Fulham, and carried off old Sedley and his daughter—to return no more. Emmy took away with her her pictures, and her piano—that little old piano which had now passed into a plaintive jingling old age, but which she loved for reasons of her own.

Major Dobbin was exceedingly pleased when, as he was superintending the arrangements of Jos's new house, the cart arrived with the little piano. “ I'm glad you've kept it,” he said to Amelia, in a very sentimental manner, “ I was afraid you didn't care about it.” “ I value it more than anything I have in the world,” she replied. “ Can I do otherwise ?—did not *he* give it me ? ”

“ I did not know,” said poor old Dob. and his countenance fell.

Emmy did not note the circumstance at the time, but she thought about it afterwards. And then it struck her that it was William who had given her the piano, and not George, as she had fancied. So the next day she said with rather a faltering voice to Dobbin.

I have to beg your pardon about something. I never thanked you for the piano when you gave it me, many years ago. I thought somebody else had given it. Thank you, William." She held out her hand; but the poor little woman's heart was bleeding; and as for her eyes, of course they were at their work

But William could hold no more. "Amelia," he said, "I did buy it for you. I loved you then as I do now. I think I loved you from the first minute I saw you. You were but a girl in ringlets; you came down singing, and we went to Vauxhall. Since then I have thought of but one woman in the world, and that was you. I came to tell you this before I went to India, but you did not care, and I hadn't the heart to speak. You did not care whether I stayed or went."

"I was very ungrateful," Amelia said,

"No; only indifferent. I have nothing to make a woman to be otherwise. I know what you are feeling now. You are hurt at the discovery that the piano came from me and not from George. I forgot or I should never have spoken of it so. It is for me to ask your pardon for being a fool for a moment, and thinking that years of devotion might have pleaded with you."

"It is you who are cruel now," Amelia said, with some spirit. "George is my husband, here and in heaven. How could I love any other but him? I am his now as when you first saw me, dear William. It was he who told me how good and generous you were. Have you not

been everything to me and my boy? Be his friend still and mine—" and here her voice broke, and she hid her face on his shoulder. The major folded his arms round her, holding her to him as if she was a child, and kissed her head. "I will not change, dear Amelia," he said. "I ask no more than your love. I think I would not have it otherwise."

Jos's was a modest establishment. The butler was valet also. Emmy was supplied with a maid, a country girl from Sir William Dobbins's estate; a good girl, whose kindness and humility disarmed Mrs. Osborne, who was terrified at the idea of having a servant to wait upon herself, and did not in the least know how to use one. But the maid was very useful in the family, dexterously tending old Mr. Sedley, who kept almost entirely to his own quarters, and did not mix in the gay doings in the house.

George was allowed to come much more frequently to see his mother, as Jos was reported to be immensely rich. He dined with them once or twice a week, and bullied his relations there as in Russell Square. He was always respectful to Major Dobbin, however, and could not help admiring his general love of truth and justice. He had met no such man as yet in the course of his experience, and he had an instinctive liking for a gentleman.

George never tired of his praises of the major to his mother. "I like him, mamma, because he knows such lots of things. When we go out together, he tells me

stories about my papa, and never about himself ; though I heard Colonel Buckler, at grandpapa's, say that he was one of the bravest officers in the army, and had distinguished himself ever so much."

Before long Emmy had a visiting book, and was driving about regularly in a carriage, and they soon became as familiar to her as the humble routine of Brompton. She accommodated herself to one as to the other ; and was voted, in female society, rather a pleasing young person—not much in her, but amiable, and that sort of thing.

There came a day when the round of decorous pleasures and solemn gaieties in which Mr Jos. Sedley's family indulged, was interrupted by an event which happens in most houses. The period of mourning for Mrs. Sedley's death was only just concluded, when it became evident to those about Mr. Sedley, that the old man was about to go to seek for his wife in the dark land whither she had preceded him. In his sickness the old man clung to his daughter. To tend him became almost the sole business of her life. Her bed was placed close to the door which opened into his chamber, and she was awake at the slightest noise. He loved his daughter with more fondness now, perhaps, than ever he had done since the days of her childhood. In the discharge of gentle offices and kind filial duties, this simple creature shone most especially. "She walks into the room as silently as a sunbeam," Dobbin thought, as he saw her passing in and out from her father's room :

a cheerful sweetness lighting up her face as she moved to and fro, graceful and noiseless.

So there came one morning and sunrise, when all the world got up and set about its various works and pleasures with the exception of old John Sedley, who was not to fight with fortune, or to hope or scheme any more : but to go and take up a quiet residence in the churchyard at Brompton by the side of his old wife. Emmy was bowed down by no especial grief, and rather solemn than sorrowful. She prayed that her own end might be as calm and painless, and thought with trust and reverence of the words which she had heard from her father during his illness, indicative of his faith, his resignation and, his future hope.

Major Dobbin's position as guardian to Georgy rendered some meetings with old Mr. Osborne inevitable ; and it was at one of these that the grandfather, a keen man of business, discovered that it was out of William Dobbin's own pocket that the fund had been supplied upon which the widow and child had subsisted. When pressed upon the point, Dobbin could only blush and stammer. "Major Dobbin," said the other, "Give me leave to tell you you are a very noble fellow. There's my hand, sir, though I little thought that my flesh and blood was living on you ", and the pair shook hands.

More than once after that he asked the major about—about Mrs. George Osborne—a theme on which the major could be very eloquent when he chose. He told Mr. Osborne

of her sufferings—of her passionate attachment to her husband, whose memory she worshipped still—of the tender and dutiful manner in which she had supported her parents and given up her boy, when it seemed her duty to do so. “ You don’t know what she endured, sir,” said honest Dobbin ; “ and if she took your son away from you, she gave hers to you ; and however much you loved your George, depend upon it, she loved hers ten times more.”

It had never struck the old gentleman that the widow could feel any pain at parting with the boy, or that his having a fine fortune could grieve her. A reconciliation was announced as speedy and inevitable ; and Amelia’s heart already began to beat at the notion of the awful meeting with George’s father.

It was never, however, destined to take place. One day, when he should have come down to breakfast, his servant, missing him, went into his dressing-room, and found him lying at the foot of the dressing-table, in a fit. He never could speak again ; and four days later he died. He tried hard to speak once or twice. What did he wish to say ? I hope it was that he wanted to see Amelia, and be reconciled to the dear and faithful wife of his son : it was most likely that ; for his will showed that the hatred which he had so long cherished had gone out of his heart.

CHAPTER XVI

A FOREIGN TOUR

When Mr. Osborne’s will was read, it was found that half the property was left to George and the remainder to

the two sisters. An annuity of five hundred pounds chargeable on George's property, was left to his mother, 'the widow of my beloved son George Osborne,' who was to resume the guardianship of the boy.

When Amelia heard that her father-in-law was reconciled to her, her heart melted, and she was grateful for the fortune left to her. But when she heard that Georgy was restored to her, and knew that William's bounty had supported her in her poverty, how it was William who gave her her husband, and her son—she sank on her knees, and prayed for blessings on that constant and kind heart.

To get away from this atmosphere of sadness and death, as soon as the period of mourning was over, everybody jumped with joy when a foreign tour was proposed.

A few weeks later the party arrived at Cologne, having journeyed up the Rhine by steamer, and the carriage of Mr. Jos Sedley was put ashore. The other members of the party were his sister and her son, Georgy, and a gentleman of whom the family were accustomed to see a good deal. Jos had his court dress with him: he had insisted that Dobbin should bring his uniform; he announced that it was his intention to be presented at some foreign courts, and pay his respects to the sovereigns of the countries which he honoured with a visit.

Wherever the party stopped, and an opportunity was offered, Mr. Jos left his own card and the major's upon 'Our Minister.' As for Emmy, she was very happy and

pleased. Dobbin used to carry about for her her stool and sketch-book, and admired the drawings of the good-natured little artist, as they had never been admired before. Dobbin was the interpreter of the party, having a good military knowledge of the German language; and he and the delighted George fought the campaigns of the Rhine and the Palatinate.

Mr. Jos did not engage in the afternoon excursions of his fellow-travellers. He slept a good deal after dinner, or basked in the arbours of the pleasant inn-gardens; and read all the English news; and whether he woke or slept our friends did not miss him very much.

It was at the comfortable ducal town of Pumpernickel that everybody observed the majesty of Jos, and the liveliness of the little boy, the kindness of the lady, his mamma, and the simple good-humour of the tall Major who accompanied them. And Pumpernickel was glad when the stout gentleman pronounced his opinion that they should stay some time at that charming place.

During the season there was a room for gambling at the Town-Hall. That little scapegrace, George Osborne, whose pockets were always full of money, came there one evening, while his relations were away at a grand festival of the court, and hankered round the tables where the croupiers and the punters were at work. Women were playing; they were masked, some of them; this licence was allowed during the festival time.

A woman with light hair, in a low dress, and with a black mask on, was seated at one of the roulette tables. As the croupier called out the colour or number, she pricked on a card with great care and regularity, and only venture her money on the colours after the red or black had come up a certain number of times. It was strange to look at her.

But in spite of her care and assiduity she guessed wrong, and the last two florins followed each other under the croupier's rake, as he cried out, with his inexorable voice, the winning colour and number. She gave a sigh, a shrug of her shoulders, and dashing the pin through the card on the table, sat thrumming it for a while. Then she looked round her, and saw Georgy's honest face staring at the scene. The little scamp! what business had he to be there?

When she saw the boy, at whose face she looked hard through her shining eyes and mask, she said, with a little foreign accent,

"Will you do me a little favour?"

"What is it?" said George, blushing.

"Play this for me, if you please, put it on any number." And she took from her bosom a purse, and out of it a gold piece, the only coin there, and she put it into George's hand. The boy laughed, and did as he was bid. The number came up sure enough.

"Thank you," said she, pulling her winnings towards her; "what is your name."

"My name's Osborne," said Georgy, and was fingering in his own pockets for florins, and just about to make a trial, when the major, in his uniform, and Jos, in his court suit, made their appearance. It is probable that the major and Jos had gone home and found the boy's absence, for the former instantly went up to him, and taking him by the shoulder, pulled him briskly back from the place of temptation.

"Hadn't you better come too, Jos," the major said ; but the stout civilian preferred to wait. He was standing close by the lady in the mask, who was playing with pretty good luck now ; and looking on much interested in the game. Jos was no gambler, but not averse to the little excitement of the sport now and then ; and he had some napoleons clinking in his pocket. He put down one over the shoulder of the little gambler before him, and they won. She made a little movement to make room for him by her side.

"Come and give me good luck," she said.

The portly gentleman, looking round to see that nobody observed him, sat down, with some words of compliment.

"Do you play much ?" the mask said.

"I put a nap or two down," said Jos, with a superb air.

"Yes ; a nap after dinner," said the lady archly. But Jos looking frightened, she continued, "You do not play to win. No more do I. I play to forget, but I cannot. I cannot forget old times, monsieur. Your little nephew is the image of his father ; and you— you are not changed—

but, yes, you are. Everybody changes, everybody forgets ; nobody has a heart."

"Good God, who is it ?" asked Jos in a flutter.

"Can't you guess, Joseph Sedley?" said the little woman, in a sad voice, and undoing her mask, she looked at him.

"Good Heavens ! Mrs. Crawley !" gasped out Jos.

"Rebecca," said the other, putting her hand on his. "I am stopping at the 'Elephant.' Ask for Madame de Raudon. I saw my dear Amelia to-day ; how pretty she looked, and how happy ! So do you ! Everybody but me, who am wretched, Joseph Sedley." And she put her money over from the red to the black, as if by a chance movement of her hand, and while she was wiping her eyes with a pocket-handkerchief fringed with torn lace.

The red came up again, and she lost the whole of that stake. "Come away," she said. "Come with me a little - we are old friends, are we not, dear Mr. Sedley ?"

We must pass over a part of Mrs. Rebecca Crawley's biography with that lightness and delicacy which the world demands. She lingered about London while her husband was making preparations for his departure to his seat of government ; and it is believed made more than one attempt to see her brother-in-law, and to work upon his feelings which she had almost enlisted in her favour. Probably Lady Jane interposed. I have heard that she quite astonished her husband by the spirit which she exhibited in this quarrel, and her determination to disown Mrs. Becky. Of

her own initiative she invited Rawdon to come and stop at Crawley House, until his departure for Coventry Island, knowing that with him for a guard Mrs. Becky would not try to force her door : and she looked curiously at all the letters which arrived for Sir Pitt, lest he and his sister-in-law should be corresponding. Not but that Rebecca could have written had she a mind ; but she did not try to see or write to Pitt at his own house, and consented to his demand that the correspondence regarding her conjugal differences should be carried on by lawyers only.

The fact was, that Pitt's mind had been poisoned against her. A short time after Lord Steyne's accident his secretary had been with the baronet ; and had given him such a biography of Becky as had astonished the member for Queen's Crawley. I have no doubt that the greater part of the story was false ; but Becky was left with a sad, sad reputation in the esteem of a country gentleman who had once been rather partial to her.

It was found that Rawdon could not spare to his wife more than three hundred a year, which he proposed to pay to her on an undertaking that she would never trouble him. She was so much occupied in arranging these affairs of business that she forgot to take any steps whatever about her son, and did not even once propose to go and see him. That young gentleman was consigned to the entire guardianship of his aunt and uncle, the former of whom had always possessed a great share of the child's affection. His mamma wrote him a neat letter from Boulogne when she

quitted England, and said she was going to take a Continental tour, during which she would have the pleasure of writing to him again. But she never did for a year afterwards, and not indeed, until Sir Pitt's only boy, always sickly, died of whooping-cough - then Rawdon's mamma wrote the most affectionate composition to her darling on, who was made heir of Queen's Crawley by this accidents.

Our dear Becky's first flight was not very far. She perched upon the French coast at Boulogne, and there lived in rather a genteel, widowed manner, until the English colony found out her history. So from place to place Becky fled uneasily, trying with all her might to be respectable, and alas! always found out some day or other. For a period she lived in Paris, but it is probable that her creditors of 1815 found her out; for the poor little woman was forced to fly from that city rather suddenly.

So our little wanderer went about setting up her tent in various cities of Europe, as restless as Ulysses. Her taste for disrespectability grew more and more remarkable. She became a perfect Bohemian ere long, herding with people whom it would make your hair stand on end to meet. She was, in fact, no better than a vagabond upon this earth. When she got her money she gambled; when she had gambled it she was put to shifts to live; who knows how or by what means she succeeded?

The day after the meeting at the play-table, Jos had himself arrayed with unusual care and splendour, and sallied forth at an early hour, and was presently seen making

inquiries at the door of the 'Elephant.' Directed upstairs, Jos went creaking and puffing up to the final landing, where he began to wipe his face. Just then a door opened, and Becky's little head peeped out, full of archness and mischief. She lighted on Jos. "It's you," she said, coming out. "How long I have been waiting for you! Come in and talk to me," and she gave the civilian's hand a little squeeze, and laughingly placed him upon a chair.

Becky began forthwith to tell her story — a tale so neat, simple, and artless, that it was quite evident, from hearing her, that if ever there was a white-robed angel escaped from heaven to the infernal machinations and villainy of friends here below that spotless being,—that miserable, unsullied martyr,—was present before Jos.

They had a very long, amicable, and confidential talk there; and Jos went away, convinced that she was the most virtuous, as she was one of the most fascinating of women, and revolving in his mind all sorts of benevolent schemes for her welfare. He walked over to Dobbin's lodgings with great solemnity, and there imparted to him the affecting history with which he had just been made acquainted, without, however, mentioning the play business of the night before.

When the major heard the story, he said disrespectfully, "The little minx, has she come to light again? That little devil brings mischief wherever she goes. Why has she left her husband? Wasn't there a scandal about their separation? I think I heard something." Jos tried in

vain to convince Dobbin that Mrs. Becky was in all respects a most injured and virtuous female.

"Let us ask Mrs. George if this woman ought to be visited or not," said the artful major. He remembered that Émmy was at one time cruelly and deservedly jealous of Rebecca, and never mentioned her name but with a shrinking and terror—"A jealous woman never forgives," thought Dobbin. "I will be content with her verdict."

Jos opened the business with his usual pomp of words. "Amelia, my dear," said he, "I have had the most extraordinary adventure—an old friend of yours has just arrived here, and I should like you to see her."

"It is a woman whom I dislike very much," said the major, "and whom you have no cause to love."

"It is Rebecca, I'm sure it is Rebecca," Amelia cried, very much agitated. Brussels, Waterloo, old griefs and remembrances rushed back into her gentle heart, and caused a cruel agitation there.

"Don't let me see her," Emmy continued, "I couldn't see her."

"I told you so," said Dobbin to Jos.

"She hasn't a friend in the world. She's so miserable," Jos urged. "Her family has been most cruel to her."

"Poor creature!" Amelia said.

"She's beside herself with grief," he resumed. "She had a little boy of the same age as Georgy."

"Yes, yes, I remember," Amelia remarked. "Well?"

“The most beautiful child ever seen ! a perfect angel, who adored his mother. The ruffians tore him shrieking out of her arms, and have never allowed her to see him.”

“Dear Joseph,” Emmy cried out, starting up at once, “let us go and see her this minute.” And she ran into her bed-chamber, tied on her bonnet in a flutter, and ordered Dobbin to follow her.

The landlord of the “Elephant” received them with great respect, and conducted them upstairs.

“Gracious lady, gracious lady,” said he, knocking at Becky’s door.

“Who is it ?” Becky said, putting out her head, and she gave a little scream. There stood Emmy in a tremble, and Dobbin, the tall major with his cane. He stood still watching, and very much interested at the scene ; but Emmy sprang forward with open arms towards Rebecca, and forgave her at that moment and embraced her and kissed her with all her heart. Ah, poor wretch, when were your lips pressed before by such pure kisses ?

Emmy received Becky’s story, which was told at some length, as those persons who are acquainted with her character may imagine that she would. She quivered with indignation at the conduct of the unprincipled Rawdon. Her eyes made notes of admiration for every one of the sentences in which Becky described the persecutions of her aristocratic relatives, and the falling away of her husband. (Becky did not abuse him. She spoke rather in sorrow than in anger. She had loved him only too fondly : and

was he not the father of her boy ?) And as for the separation scene from the child, while Becky was reciting it, Emmy retired altogether behind her pocket-handkerchief, so that the consummate little actress must have been charmed to see the effect which her performance produced on her audience.

The major had retreated downstairs during this affecting interview, and waited for Amelia in the common room of the hotel. After an hour she appeared. She wanted to see Jos that instant ; and tripped across the market-place very briskly.

They found the civilian pacing his room, biting his nails, and looking across towards the 'Elephant'. He was, on his side too, very anxious to see Mrs. Osborne.

"Well?" said he.

"The poor dear creature, how she has suffered." Emmy said.

"God bless my soul, yes," said Jos, wagging his head.

"She may have the maid's room; who can go upstairs," Emmy continued.

"Why, you don't mean to say you are going to have that woman into the *house*?" bounced out the major, jumping up.

"Of course we are," said Amelia, in the most innocent way in the world. "Of course we are going to have her here."

"Of course, my dear," said Jos.

"Don't have her in the house, I implore you," cried the major.

"You who are always good and kind : I'm astonished at you, major William," Amelia said. "Why, what is the moment to help her, but when she is so miserable ? The oldest friend I ever had, and—"

"She was not always your friend, Amelia," the major said, for he was quite angry. This allusion was too much for Emmy, who looking the major almost fiercely in the face, cried, "For shame, Major Dobbin !" and walked out of the room with a majestic air.

"To allude to that !" she cried, when the door was closed. "Oh, it was cruel of him to remind me of it. If I had forgiven it, ought he to have spoken ?"

She paced the room trembling and indignant. The wound which years had scarcely healed, bled afresh, and, oh, how bitterly ! Poor Dobbin, that unlucky word had undone the work of many a year — the long laborious edifice of a life of love and constancy.

William, though he saw by Amelia's looks that a great crisis had come, nevertheless continued to implore Sedley, in the most energetic terms, to beware of Rebecca : and he eagerly, almost frantically, adjured Jos not to receive her. Had he been less violent, or more dexterous, he might have succeeded in his supplications to Jos ; but the civilian was only roused to anger by the major's tone, and he began a blustering speech about his desire not to have his affairs meddled with, when the colloquy—rather a long and stormy one—was put an end to in the simplest way possible, namely, by the arrival of Mrs. Becky, with a porter from the 'Elephant,' in charge of her very meagre baggage.

She greeted her host with affectionate respect, and made a shrinking salutation to major Dobbin, who, as her instinct assured her at once, was her enemy ; and the bustle consequent upon her arrival brought Amelia out of her room. Emmy embraced her guest with the greatest warmth, and took no notice of the major, except to fling him an angry look—the most unjust glance that had ever appeared in that poor woman's face since she was born. But she had private reasons of her own, and was bent upon being angry with him. And Dobbin, indignant at the injustice, went off, making her a bow quite as haughty as the killing curtsy with which the little woman chose to bid him farewell.

Georgy came in at dinner-time.

"Hullo! where's Dob?" he asked, with his usual simplicity of language. "Major Dobbin is dining out, I suppose," his mother said; and drawing the boy to her, introduced him to Mrs. Crawley. "Dear boy," said Rebecca, "he is just like my—" Emotion choked her further utterance; but Amelia understood, as well as if she had spoken.

After dinner, Georgy, being close to the guest, "I say," said he.

"What do you say?" Becky asked, laughing.

"You're the lady I saw in the mask at the tables."

"Hush! you little sly creature," Becky said, taking his hand. "Your uncle was there too, and mamma mustn't know."

"Oh, no, by no means," answered the little fellow.

"You see, we are good friends already," Becky said, to Emmy; and it must be owned that Mrs. Osborne had introduced a most judicious and amiable companion into her house.

When, in the afternoon of the next day, the major gained admission to Amelia, instead of the cordial and affectionate greeting to which he had been accustomed now for many a long day, he received the salutation of a curtsy, and of a little gloved hand retracted the moment after it was accorded to him.

"You will admit, Amelia," said the major, after a pause, "that I have a claim to be heard in this house."

"It is generous to remind me of our obligations to you," she answered.

"The claims I mean are those left me by George's father," William said.

"Yes, and you insulted his memory. You did yesterday. You know you did. And I will never forgive you. Never!" said Amelia. She shot out each little sentence in a tremor of anger and emotion.

"You don't mean that, Amelia?" William said, sadly. "You don't mean that words uttered in a hurried moment, are to weigh against a whole life's devotion. I think that George's memory has not been injured by the way in which I have dealt with it, and if we are come to bandying reproaches, I at least merit none from his widow and the mother of his son. Reflect, afterwards when—when you

are at leisure, and your conscience will withdraw this accusation. It does even now." Amelia held down her head.

"It is not that speech of yesterday," he continued, "which moves you. That is but the pretext, or I have loved you and watched you for fifteen years in vain. Have I not in that time learned to read all your feelings, and look into your thoughts? I know what your heart is capable of; it can cling faithfully to a recollection, and cherish a fancy; but it can't feel such an attachment as mine deserves to mate with. You are not worthy of the love which I have devoted to you. You are very good-natured, and have done your best; but you couldn't reach up to the height of the attachment which I bore you, and which a loftier soul than yours might have been proud to share. Good-bye, Amelia! I have watched your struggle. Let it end. We are both weary of it."

Amelia stood scared and silent as William thus suddenly broke the chain by which she held him.

"Am I to understand then,—that you are going away, — William?" she said.

He gave a sad laugh. "I went once before," he said, "and came back after twelve years. We were young then, Amelia. Good-bye. I have spent enough of my life at this play."

The parting was over. Once more William walked to the door and was gone; and the little widow, the author of all this work, had her will, and had won her victory, and was left to enjoy it as she best might.

CHAPTER XVII

AND LAST

Mrs. Rebecca found herself suddenly in snug comfortable quarters : surrounded by friends, kindness, and good-natured simple people, such as she had not met with for many a long day ; and, wanderer as she was by force and inclination, there were moments when rest was pleasant to her. So, pleased herself, she tried with all her might to please everybody ; and we know that she was eminent and successful as a practitioner in the art of giving pleasure. In the course of a week, Jos was her sworn slave and frantic admirer. He no longer went to sleep after dinner. He drove out with Becky in his open carriage. He held little parties in her honour. Jos's house never was so pleasant since he had a house of his own, as Rebecca caused it to be. She sang, she played, she laughed ; she brought everybody to the house : and she made Jos believe that it was his own great social talents which gathered the society of the place about him.

As for Emmy, who found herself not in the least mistress of her own house, except when the bills were to be paid. Becky soon discovered the way to soothe and please her. She talked to her perpetually about major Dobbin, expressing her profound admiration for that excellent gentleman, and telling Emmy she had behaved most cruelly regarding him. Emmy defended her own conduct ; but she had no objection to hear the major praised as much as ever Becky chose to praise him ; and indeed brought the

conversation round to the Dobbin subject a score of times a day.

Emmy was not very happy. She was nervous, silent, and ill to please. The family had never known her so peevish. Her chief pleasure was to take long walks with Georgy, and then the mother and son used to talk about the major in a way which even made the boy smile. She told him she thought major William was the best man in the world ; the gentlest and the kindest, the bravest, and the humblest. "When your papa was a little boy," she said, "he often told me that it was William who defended him against a tyrant at the school where they were ; and their friendship never ceased from that day until the last, when your dear father fell."

By the way Becky, not to be behindhand in sentiment, had got a picture to hang up in her room, to the amusement of most people, and the delight of the original, who was no other than our friend Jos. For out of one of her boxes she took a picture with great glee. It was the portrait of a stout gentleman riding on an elephant . it was an Eastern scene.

"God bless my soul, it is my portrait," Jos cried out. It was he, indeed, blooming in youth and beauty, in a nan-keen jacket of 1804.

"I bought it," said Becky, in a voice trembling with emotion ; "I went to the sale to see if I could be of any use to my kind friends. I have never parted with that picture — I never will."

"Won't you?" cried Jos, with a look of unutterable rapture. "Did you really now value it for my sake?"

"You know I did, well enough," said Becky; "but why speak—why look back?—It is too late now."

That evening's conversation was delicious for Jos. Emmy only came in to go to bed very tired and unwell. Jos and his fair guest had a charming tête-à-tête, and his sister could hear, as she lay awake, Rebecca singing over to Jos the old songs of 1815. He did not sleep that night, any more than Amelia.

After June all the society of Pumpnickel made for the different watering-places; and Jos decided to pass the summer at Ostend. Emmy did not care where she went much. Georgy jumped at the idea of a move. As for Becky, she came as a matter of course. She might have some misgivings about the friends whom she should meet at Ostend, and who might be likely to tell ugly stories—but, bah! she was strong enough to hold her own. She had cast such an anchor in Jos now as would require a strong storm to shake. That incident of the picture had finished him.

There Emmy began to take baths, and get what good she could from them, and though scores of people of Becky's acquaintance passed her, and cut her, yet Mrs. Osborne, who walked about with her, was not aware of the treatment experienced by the friend whom she had chosen so judiciously as a companion; and Becky never thought fit to tell her what was passing under her innocent eyes.

Some of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's acquaintances, however, acknowledged her readily enough,—perhaps more readily than she would have desired ; and they speedily got an introduction to the hospitable board and select circle of Mr. Joseph Sedley. In fact, they would take no denial ; they burst into the house whether Becky was at home or not, walked into Mrs. Osborne's drawing-room, which they perfumed with tobacco, called Jos ' old buck,' and invaded his dinner table, and laughed and drank for long hours there.

The presence of these men inspired Amelia with intolerable terror and aversion. They paid her tipsy compliments ; they leered at her over the dinner-table, and made advances that filled her with sickening dismay. She felt a horror and uneasiness in their presence, and longed to fly.

She besought, she entreated Jos to go home. Not he. He was slow of movement, tied to Becky's leading-strings. She was not anxious to go to England.

At last Emmy took a great resolution—made the great plunge. She wrote off a letter to a friend whom she had on the other side of the water ; a letter about which she did not speak a word to anybody, which she carried herself to the post. She did not come out of her room after her walk. Becky thought it was the men who frightened her.

" She mustn't stop here," Becky reasoned with herself. " She must go away, the silly little fool. She is still whimpering after that gaby of a husband—dead (and served right !) these fifteen years. She shan't marry any

of these blackguards. No, she shall marry her Dobbin. I'll settle it this very night."

So Becky took a cup of tea to Amelia in her room, and found that lady in a most melancholy and nervous condition.

She laid down the cup of tea.

"Thank you," said Amelia.

"Listen to me, Amelia," said Becky, marching up and down the room before the other. "I want to talk to you. You must go away from here and from the impertinences of these men. I won't have you harassed by them; and they will insult you if you stay. I tell you they are rascals. Never mind how I know them. I know everybody. Jos can't protect you, he wants a protector himself. You are not more fit to live in the world than a baby in arms. You must marry, or you and your precious boy will go to ruin. You must have a husband, you fool; and one of the best gentlemen I ever saw has offered to marry you a hundred times, and you have rejected him, you silly, heartless, ungrateful little creature!"

"I tried—I tried my best, indeed I did, Rebecca," said Amelia, "but I couldn't forget—" and she looked up at her husband's portrait.

"Couldn't forget *him*?" cried out Becky, "that selfish humbug, that low-bred Cockney dandy, that padded booby, who had neither wit, nor manners, nor heart, and was no more to be compared to your major than you are to Queen Elizabeth. Why, the man was weary of you, and

would have jilted you, but that Dobbin forced him to keep his word. He owned it to me. He never cared for you. He used to sneer about you to me, time after time; and made love to me the week after he married you."

"It's false! It's false! Rebecca," cried out Amelia, starting up. "Look there, you fool," Becky said; and taking a little paper out of her belt, she flung it into Emmy's lap. "You know his hand-writing. He wrote that to me—wanted me to run away with him—gave it me under your nose, the day before he was shot—and served him right!" Becky repeated.

Emmy did not hear her; she was looking at the letter. It was that which George had put into Becky's bouquet on the night of the ball. It was as she said: the foolish young man had asked her to fly.

Emmy's head sank down, and for almost the last time in which she shall be called upon to weep in this history, she commenced that work. Her head fell to her bosom and her hands went up to her eyes; and there for awhile she gave way to her emotions, as Becky stood by and regarded her. Who shall analyse those tears, and say whether they were sweet or bitter? Was she most grieved because the idol of her life was tumbled down and shivered at her feet; or indignant that her love had been so despised; or glad because the barrier was removed which modesty had placed between her and a new, a real affection. "There is nothing to forbid me now," she thought. "I may love him with all my heart now. Oh, I will, I will, if he will

but let me, and forgive me." I believe it was this feeling rushed over all the others which agitated that gentle little bosom.

Indeed, she did not cry so much as Becky expected—the other soothed and kissed her—a rare mark of sympathy with Mrs. Becky. She treated Emmy like a child, and patted her head. "And now let us get pen and ink, and write to him to come this minute," she said.

"I—I wrote to him this morning," Emmy said, blushing exceedingly.

Becky screamed with laughter—the whole house echoed with the sound.

Two mornings after this little scene, although the day was rainy and gusty, and Amelia had had an exceedingly wakeful night, listening to the wind roaring, and pitying all travellers by land and sea, yet she got up early, and insisted upon taking a walk upon the Dyke with Georgy ; and there she looked out westward across the dark sea line, and over the swollen billows which came tumbling and frothing to the shore.

"I hope he won't cross in this weather," Emmy said.

"I bet ten to one he does," the boy answered. "Look mother, there's the smoke of the steamer."

But though the steamer was under weigh, he might not be on board ; he might not have got the letter ; he might not choose to come.—A hundred fears poured one over the other into the little heart, as fast as the waves on the Dyke.

George was looking at the vessel. "How she does pitch!" he said. "There goes a wave slap over her bows. There's only two people on deck. There's a man lying down, and a chap—in a—cloak with a—Hooray! It's Dob, by Jingo"; and he flung his arms round his mother. As for that lady: she was sure it was William. It could be no other. Of course he would come: what could he do else but come? She knew he would come.

As the vessel came alongside, there were few idlers abroad. That young scapegrace George had fled; and as the gentleman in the cloak stepped ashore, there was scarcely any one present to see what took place, which was briefly this:—

A lady in a dripping white bonnet went up to him, and in the next minute she had altogether disappeared under the folds of the cloak. When Emmy emerged from it, she had tight hold of one of William's hands, and looked up in his face. It was full of sadness and tender love and pity. She understood its reproach, and hung down her head.

"It was time you sent for me, Amelia," he said.

"You will never go again, William."

"No, never," he answered: and pressed the dear little soul once more to his heart. As they issued from the Quay, Georgy broke out on them, with a loud laugh of welcome; he danced round the couple as he led them to the house. Jos wasn't up yet; Becky not visible (though she looked at them through the blinds). Georgy ran off

to see about breakfast. Emmy went to undo the clasp of William's cloak, and—we will go with Georgy and look after breakfast. The vessel is in port. Dobbin has got the prize he has been trying for all his life. This is what he has asked for every day and hour for eighteen years. Good-bye, honest William!—Farewell, dear Amelia—Grow green again, tender little parasite, round the rugged old oak to which you cling.

Rebecca, satisfied with her part in the transaction, never presented herself before Dobbin and Amelia. "Particular business took her to Bruges," she said; whither she went; and only Georgy and his uncle were present at the marriage ceremony. When it was over, and Georgy had gone off with his parents, Mrs. Becky returned to comfort the solitary bachelor, Joseph Sedley. He preferred a Continental life, he said, and declined to join in the housekeeping with his sister and her husband.

Dobbin quitted the service after his marriage, and rented a pretty little place in Hampshire, not far from Queen's Crawley. Lady Jane and Mrs. Dobbin became fast friends. Her ladyship was godmother to Amelia's child, which bore her name; and a pretty close friendship subsisted between the two lads, George and Rawdon, who both entered the same college at Cambridge, and quarrelled with each other about Lady Jane's daughter, with whom they were both in love. A match between George and that young lady was long a favourite scheme of both the matrons, though I have heard that Miss Crawley herself inclined towards her cousin.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's name was never mentioned by either family. There were reasons why all should be silent regarding her. For wherever Joseph Sedley went, she travelled likewise ; and the infatuated man seemed to be entirely her slave.

On hearing from his lawyers that his brother-in-law had been trying to raise money, Dobbin crossed over to inquire into the state of affairs. He found Jos at one of the large hotels in Brussels. Mrs. Crawley occupied another suite of apartments in the same hotel. Dobbin found Jos in a condition of pitiable infirmity ; and dreadfully afraid of Rebecca, though eager in his praises of her. She had tended him through a series of unheard-of illnesses, with a fidelity most admirable. " But—but—oh, for God's sake, do come and live near me, and—and—see me sometimes," whimpered out the unfortunate man.

Dobbin's brow darkened at this. " We can't, Jos. Emmy can't come to you. Be a man, Jos : break off this disreputable connection. Come home to your family. We hear your affairs are involved."

" Involved !" cried Jos. " Who has told such calumnies ? All my money is placed out most advantageously. Mrs. Crawley—that is—I mean—it is laid out to the best interest."

Dobbin besought Jos to fly at once—to go back to India ; to do anything to break off a connection which might have the most fatal consequences for him.

Jos clasped his hands, and cried, " He would go back to India. He would do anything; only he must have time : they mustn't say anything to Mrs. Crawley :— she'd kill me if she knew it. You don't know what a terrible woman she is," the poor wretch said

" Then come away with me," said Dobbin ; but Jos had not the courage. " He would see Dobbin again in the morning. He must go now. Becky might come in." And Dobbin quitted him full of forebodings.

He never saw Jos more. Three months afterwards Joseph Sedley died at Aix-la-Chapelle. It was found that all his property had been muddled away in speculations, and that all his assets were the two thousand pounds for which his life was insured, and which was left to " his friend and invaluable attendant during sickness, Rebecca, wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C. B." The Insurance Company swore it was the blackest case that had ever come before them ; but Mrs. Crawley came to town at once, and dared them to refuse payment. She invited examination, and declared that she was the object of an infamous conspiracy, which had been pursuing her through life. The money was paid, and her character established.

His Excellency, Colonel Rawdon Crawley, died at Coventry Island, six weeks before the demise of his brother Pitt. The estate consequently devolved upon the present Sir Rawdon Crawley, Bart.

He, too, has declined to see his mother, to whom he makes a liberal allowance ; and who, besides, appears to be very wealthy. The baronet lives entirely at Queen's Crawley, with Lady Jane and her daughter ; whilst Rebecca hangs about Bath and Cheltenham. She has her enemies. Who has not. Her life is her answer to them. She busies herself in works of piety. Her name is in all the Charity Lists. She is always having stalls at Charity Bazaars. Emmy, her children, and husband, coming to London some time back, found themselves suddenly before her at one of these bazaars. She cast down her eyes demurely and smiled as they started away from her : Emmy scurrying off on the arm of George (now grown a dashing young gentleman), and Dobbin seizing up his little Janey, of whom he is fonder than anything in the world.

" Fonder than he is of me," Emmy thinks, with a sigh. But he never said a word to Amelia, that was not kind and gentle ; or thought of a want of hers that he did not try to gratify.

Ah ! *Vanitas Vanitatum !* Which of us is happy in this world ? Which of us has his desire ? or, having it, is satisfied ? — Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

Mademoiselle, je viens vous faire mes adieux, I come to bid you good-bye, Miss Pinkerton.

CHAPTER II

Gets his company, is promoted to captain.

Tete-a-tete, two persons being together without listeners.

Vainqueur, conqueror.

CHAPTER III

Potage, soup.

Pelisse, lady's mantle with sleeves or arm-holes.

CHAPTER IV

Lady-killer, male flirt.

Ensign, the lowest commissioned officer in infantry.

Packets, mail-boats.

CHAPTER VIII

Noble duchess, the Duchess of Richmond. *Cf.* Scott's poem beginning "There was a sound of revelry by night."

Debut, one's first appearance.

Our Father, the first words of the Lord's Prayer.

CHAPTER IX

Epaulets, shoulder pieces of officer's uniform, denoting rank.

C. B. Commander of the Bath : an Order.

CHAPTER XVI

Croupiers, the rakers-in of the money at gaming-tables.

Punters, the gamblers.

CHAPTER XVII

Vanitas vanitatum, vanity of vanities. The cry of the preacher in the Book of *Ecclesiastes* in the Bible.

GLOSSARY OF PROPER NAMES

(The figures in brackets refer to the chapters.)

Adonis, (2), the beautiful youth in classical mythology with whom the goddess Venus fell in love. Cf. Shakespeare's poem, *Venus and Adonis*.

Aix-la-Chapelle, (17), or **Aachen**, a well-known German town, near the Dutch frontier.

Bath, (17), in the west of England, a centre of fashion and health resort in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Bloomsbury, (4), a central district of London, north of the Thames.

Bohemian, (16), one who lives an unconventional life, disregarding the ordinary social fetters.

Boney, (7), a nickname for Napoleon Bonaparte.

Boulogne, (16), on the English Channel, opposite Dover, a port and Cross-Channel steamer terminus.

Brighton, (6), a celebrated watering-place and health resort on the south coast of England, in Sussex.

Brompton, (4), a district in west London, north of the river; between Fulham and the City.

Bruges, (7), in Belgium, about 20 miles inland from Ostend: an old and interesting Flemish city.

Brussels, (7), the capital city of Belgium.

Cinderella, (5), heroine of the well-known fairy-tale. An ill-treated little maid-of-all-work, she became, by the help of her Fairy-Godmother, the wife of the Prince of the land.

Chantilly, (6), about thirty miles north of Paris, a country town in beautiful forest surroundings.

Charterhouse, (14), a celebrated English Public School. Founded in 1611, it was situated in Aldersgate, London, until 1872, when the school was removed to Godalming in Surrey.

Chatham, (6), a military and naval depot in Kent.

Chickashaw, (3), a fictitious name for a tribe of American Indians.

Chiswick, (1), a western suburb of London, lying to the west of Hammersmith ; on the north bank of the Thames.

Chowringhi, (6), the principal street and centre of European life in Calcutta.

Cologne, (16), a famous German city on the Rhine.

Corsican tyrant, (11), Napoleon Bonaparte, who was a Corsican.

Coventry Island, (14), a fictitious name, probably suggested by the idea of being " sent to Coventry."

Cheltenham, (2), in Gloucestershire, a famous western health resort and centre of fashion.

Delilah, (4), the Philistine woman who seduced Samson, the Jewish champion. Cf. Milton's *Samson Agonistes*.

Don Juan, (6), one skilled in bending women to his will. Cf. Byron's *Don Juan*.

Dyke, (17), the high rampart and esplanade found along the Belgian coast. It is a promenade for holiday-makers, and, at the same time a protection for the low-lying interior against the inroads of the ocean.

Fielding, (4), 18th century novelist, author of *Tom Jones*.

Flanders, (9), the district now south-west Belgium. The Belgian reigning family are Counts of Flanders, a name familiar to students of medieval history.

Flemish, (7), the name given to the people and the language of Flanders.

Fulham, (5), a western district of London, on the north bank of the river.

Ghent, (7), a celebrated Flemish city, halfway between Ostend and Brussels, about 20 miles from Bruges.

Hammersmith, (2), a western district of London, north of Fulham and the river.

Highbury, (2), a north London district.

Highlanders, (8), soldiers recruited from the Scottish clans.

Hôtel-de-ville, (7), the Town Hall, or Municipal buildings.

Johnson, Dr., (1) born 1709, died 1784, literary dictator of England in the 18th century. See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

Kensington, (2), a western residential district of London, on the north side of the river.

Leakington, (3), a fictitious name, suggesting damp conditions and wet weather.

Legion of Honour, (9) the highest French military distinction.

Mayfair, (11), a residential district of London, centre of society and fashion.

Moscow, Panorama of, (2), a spectacle to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte in his Russian Campaign and his disastrous retreat from Moscow.

Mudbury, (3), a fictitious name, suggesting the mud of the country.

Napoleon, (6), Emperor of the French ; defeated at Waterloo.

Ostend, (7), a seaport and watering-place on the Belgian coast, with a large English colony.

Palatinate, (16), a Rhine district ruled over by Counts Palatine in former days, and overrun again and again by armies.

Park Lane, (4), where the wealthy society families of England have their London residence.

Philomel, (4), the classical name for the nightingale.

Piccadilly, (12), famous street, and centre of London social life.

Place of arms, (8) the large square to be found in most cities on the Continent. Here the burghers assembled in time of danger.

Pumpernickel, (16), a fictitious name, suggestive of parish-pump politics, perhaps.

Queen Bess, (3), Elizabeth, who was Queen of England from 1558 to 1603.

Ramsgate, (7), a small seaport and health resort in Kent.

Revolution, (9), the great French Revolution of 1789, from which the nobility fled to England for safety.

Russell Square, (2), in Bloomsbury.

Sambre, (8), a river to the south-east of Brussels ; tributary of the Meuse. Namur stands at the junction of these two rivers.

Samson, (4), the Jewish champion, seduced by Delilah.

Semiramis, (1), the ambitious, autocratic, all-powerful and all-conquering Queen of Assyria about 1950 B. C.

Shetland, (11), the name of a group of islands north of Scotland.

Smollett, (4), an 18th century novelist, author of *Roderick Ranlom*, *Humphrey Clinker*, etc.

Ulysses, (16), the Greek hero in the Trojan War, who sailed about the Mediterranean after the fall of Troy, before re-joining his wife Penelope. Tennyson's poem, *Ulysses*, expresses the hero's wander-lust.

Vauxhall, (2), called also Spring Gardens, opened for pleasure in 1661. The Gardens lay to the south of the river, in Lambeth, and were a favourite resort of London pleasure-seekers until 1859, when they were closed.

